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GIFT OF  
MRS. ALEXANDER F. MORRISON



IN MEMORY OF HER HUSBAND



















**J A P A N**















# JAPAN

DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED BY  
THE JAPANESE

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AUTHORITIES AND SCHOLARS*

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A JAPANESE TEMPLE  
Vol. II

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Entered at Stationers' Hall, London, England

TO VINU  
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THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, CAMBRIDGE, U. S. A.



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## VII

### MEDIÆVAL JAPAN

(*Concluded*)



COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS WERE not without intelligent patronage from the ruling class. Here, as in all other domains of Japanese civilisation, Chinese aid appears. The system of weights and measures then in vogue, and used by all subsequent generations, was Chinese. It had been borrowed, if we may credit tradition, from that kingdom of *Wu* or *Go* to which detailed allusion has already been made, during the reign of the Emperor Sujin (97-29 B. C.), a date to be accepted, of course, with due reserve. In Shomei's time (629-642 A. D.), rules relating to weights and measures were issued, and by the ninth century all matters falling under that



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category, as well as affairs of barter and the regulation of markets, had been placed under official supervision. Midday was the time appointed for opening markets, and they closed at sunset, three strokes on the drum being the signal for all transactions to terminate. In the provinces there were fixed days in each month for holding markets, and towns often derived their names from the fact—as *Yokka-ichi* (fourth-daily market) and *Itsuka-ichi* (fifth-daily market). Prices were fixed by decree of the municipal authorities, and the section where men conducted business was separate from that where women met for the same purpose. Transactions were in the nature of barter only, until a comparatively late era. We find, indeed, a cursory historical assertion that, at the close of the fifth century, a *koku* (5.18 bushels) of rice could be purchased for one piece of silver. But no confident inference can be drawn that metallic media of exchange were in use at such an early date. It seems more probable that, desiring to record merely the fact of exceptional cheapness, the annalist employed terms current in his own



## MEDIAEVAL JAPAN

day without considering their applicability to the era of which he wrote.

The first Japanese coins, copper cash, were cast at the commencement of the eighth century, and it is easy to see from authentic annals that popular ignorance and prejudice continued for a long time to obstruct the circulation of these tokens. Various devices were employed by the government to obtain credit for its rude little pioneers of metallic money. Rank was conferred on persons that had amassed stores of them. Notifications were issued urging farmers to sell their produce for coin rather than to exchange it for goods, and exhorting travellers to provide themselves with a supply of the *Wado Kaichin*. It was announced that strings of cash would be accepted in commutation of forced labour and in lieu of taxes in kind, and, after a time, gold and silver tokens began to be struck as well as copper. But, on the whole, the system of barter remained in operation until the twelfth or thirteenth century, and the payment of taxes in kind was not given up until after the Restoration of 1867. In this latter point the



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farmer's instinct guided him correctly. His farm was capricious. Its yield varied largely owing to causes beyond his control. That the tax levied upon him should vary correspondingly, seemed just and natural, and in practice the principle received recognition from his taxmasters. A money payment, on the contrary, must tend to assume a character of fixity. He would be required to deliver up so many strings of cash or so many pieces of silver instead of so many bushels of grain or so many bundles of silk. Thus the vicissitudes of his agricultural life would gradually pass beyond the range of his ruler's sympathies. He wisely preferred the patriarchal custom of contributing to the State a yearly quota of his actual produce, and the State refrained from enforcing the more civilised, though less paternal, system.

Industries, useful and artistic, were now beginning to make marked progress. Keramics and the manufacture of lacquer, both destined to bring fame to Japan eleven centuries later, were taken up under the direct patronage of the government during the *Nara* epoch. In the



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Imperial Household Department there existed an office charged with the superintendence of potters throughout the empire, and in the Department of Finance a bureau that discharged similar functions with regard to lacquer. Evidently with the object of encouraging individual effort, it was enacted that manufacturers of lacquer utensils, of swords, of spear blades and of saddles, should inscribe their names upon their productions. Unfortunately that wholesome habit does not appear to have attained permanency. It revolted the self-effacing instinct of the Japanese artisan, who, in all ages, has worked for the sake of his work rather than for the sake of the reputation it brought him. Throughout the whole of the Orient, not excepting China, the ceramic industry had not yet developed an artistic character when the Empress Gemmyo moved the Court to Nara (710 A. D.), nor yet when Kyoto became the Imperial residence (794 A. D.).

Under the Sung dynasty (960-1234 A. D.), especially in its closing years, the potters of the Middle Kingdom produced objects of much technical merit. Specimens of their achievements



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reached Japan, where they commanded great admiration, and where they were preserved from generation to generation with infinite care. But ability to imitate them did not exist, and we shall see, when referring to the subject in due place, that keramic processes in Japan failed to emerge from a comparatively primitive state until the end of the sixteenth century.

In the art of lacquer-making, however, Japanese experts quickly developed ability that placed them at the head of all competitors. A collection of objects preserved at Nara illustrates that fact. It is a collection of the utensils, ornaments, robes and such things used by three emperors and three empresses during the Nara epoch, and it owes its existence to a custom in accordance with which a shrine or temple intrusted with the custody of a mortuary tablet became, at the same time, the recipient of a portion of the deceased's personal effects. There is no doubt about the genuineness of these articles. They actually belonged to the apparatus of the palace between the years 710 and 784 A. D. Specimens of lacquer that occur among them indicate



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considerable technical skill, though their decorative features present no earnest of the qualities for which Japan subsequently became famous. During the Heian epoch the lacquerer's art made still more marked progress. Fine examples of the *takamakiye* style, — that is to say, lacquer with golden surface and decoration in relief, — of lacquer inlaid with mother-of-pearl, a method copied from Chinese work, and of lacquer showing fields dusted, or finely tessellated, with particles of gold, survive from that era. The glyptic art, also, began to be practised with success from the tenth century. In common with all the decorative industries of the age, it owed much of its progress to the patronage of the Buddhist priests, and, doubtless because its products were destined chiefly for temple use, it seemed worthy to become the pursuit of men in high stations, two<sup>1</sup> of whom acquired lasting fame and founded a family of sculptors renowned through many generations.

It is recorded that the manufacture of rich

<sup>1</sup> Yasunao and his son, Sadatomo, who traced their descent to the Emperor Koko (885-893 A. D.).



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the country, sarsenet, *ijpe* and grass cloth were worn largely in various parts of the country in the Nara epoch, and though all these and other textile enterprises suffered some check toward the middle of the tenth century, they were not less interested in struggles which, though they continued almost without intermission, were not so long as the *Tailo*, five hundred years after the *ijpe* was not arrested but only checked.

The period now to be considered is the Kamakura epoch. A recent handbook of the story of Japan's economic development is the establishment of the feudalism as reflected by the transfer of the political centre to Kamakura. The event inaugurated is known in Japanese as the Kamakura epoch. It covered a century and a half, from the fall of the Taira and the rise of the Minamoto to the fall of Kamakura. Like all the great epochs of Japanese annals, the Kamakura epoch opened with a revolution to restore the throne to the Imperial house, and closed with a revolution to free it from the tyranny of its





THE GREAT BRONZE BELL AT NARA.



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fabrics, brocade, sarcenet, *crêpe* and grass cloth was carried on largely in various parts of the empire during the Nara epoch, and though all industrial and artistic enterprises suffered some check from the middle of the tenth century, owing to the endless internecine struggles which, commencing then, lasted almost without intermission until the time of the *Taiko*, five hundred years later, progress was not arrested but only retarded.

We pass now to the Kamakura epoch. A prominent landmark in the story of Japan's mediæval development is the establishment of military feudalism, as indicated by the transfer of the administrative centre to Kamakura. The era which that event inaugurated is known in history as the Kamakura epoch. It covered a period of a century and a half, from the fall of the Taira clan and the rise of the Minamoto to the destruction of Kamakura. Like all the great chapters of Japanese annals, the Kamakura chapter opened with a revolution to restore the authority of the Imperial house, and closed with a revolution to free it from the tyranny of its





THE GREAT EASTERN TEMPLE AT NARA



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of silk, cotton, paper, *crêpe* and grass cloth, and the like, were made only on various parts of the country during the Nara epoch, and though all industrial and artistic enterprises suffered some check from the middle of the tenth century, owing to the endless internecine struggles which, from that epoch, lasted almost without intermission till the time of the *Taiko*, five hundred years of progress was not arrested but only retarded.

We pass now to the Kamakura epoch. A great event lay back in the story of Japan's medieval development is the establishment of military government, as indicated by the transfer of the administrative centre to Kamakura. The epoch's greatest event inaugurated is known in Japanese history as the Kamakura epoch. It covered a century and a half, from the fall of the Taira clan and the rise of the Minamoto to the fall of Kamakura. Like all the great epochs of Japanese annals, the Kamakura epoch opened with a revelation to restore the throne to the Imperial house, and closed with a revelation to free it from the tyranny of its





THE GREAT BRONZE BELL AT NARA.







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original champions. To the student of Japan's story there presents itself at first sight a bewildering chaos of intrigues, of battles, of alarms, of excursions. He seems to be gazing at a stage where all the resources of theatrical management have been employed to create a scene suggesting only confusion, turmoil, the unceasing clash of weapons and the perpetual shock of unscrupulous ambitions. But when he looks more closely he begins to discern that as eddy follows eddy in the turbulent vortex, though each differs in composition and detail from its predecessor and from all the rest, each revolves about the same centre, the Throne.

The Nara and Heian epochs, that is to say, the interval between the beginning of the eighth century and the middle of the twelfth, may be called the Imperial period, for during that time the Court was not merely the nominal fountain of administrative authority,—that it had always been,—but also the actual source. We speak relatively. Japanese sovereigns ceased to be autocrats in very early ages. Whether they were ever autocrats in the Occidental sense of the



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term, seems exceedingly problematical. At no time do we find them exercising untrammelled authority, holding arbitrary power of life and death, legislating at the dictates of their own unchallenged judgment, or enriching themselves at the expense of their subjects. They stand out rather as abstractions, than as embodiments, of imperialism; rather as dispensers, than as wielders, of power. Many of them have shown noble qualities of humanity, of gracious kindness, of dignified resignation and of self-denying solicitude for the welfare of their subjects. Their benevolence is enshrined in the songs of children, but their lives have bequeathed few examples of prowess in the field or sagacity in the council chamber. It could scarcely have been otherwise. The genius of administration in Japan is oligarchical, not autocratic. From time immemorial the country has been ruled by a clan or a class. Whenever overshadowing authority was usurped by an individual and exercised exclusively, his overthrow became inevitable. Throughout the Nara and Heian epochs, the Court governed, but the machinery



## M E D I Æ V A L J A P A N

of government was furnished by the four great clans, the Fujiwara, the Tachibana, the Taira and the Minamoto. It is true that for a brief period the Imperial authority stood higher than the influence of those proud aristocrats. From the accession of the Emperor Gosanjo (1009) to the death of the ex-Emperor Shirakawa (1180), the administration was directed and controlled by the Court, the Fujiwara nobles, hitherto paramount, being resolutely thrust aside. But even then a vicarious element marred the reality of the Emperor's sway. The actual occupant of the throne was, in effect, a shadow sovereign, the substance of power being in the hands of the ex-Emperor Shirakawa. After that momentary assertion of imperialism, the aristocratic oligarchy stepped again into the forefront of the pageant. The Taira clan became paramount, and its celebrated leader, Kiyomori, held the empire for nearly twenty years in the hollow of his hand. For him, also, events revolved in an orbit that might have been unerringly constructed from elements offered by every previous chapter of his country's



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history. His encroachments not merely on the authority, but even on the dignity, of the Throne provoked a reaction, and he was crushed by the Minamoto under Yoritomo's leadership. Then, for the first time, the Imperial capital ceased to be the seat of administrative authority. The Kamakura epoch commenced. The *Shoguns* ruled really in Kamakura, the Emperors nominally in Kyoto. Note, now, how that order of things also changed. Yoritomo's judgment failed him signally at one period of his career. He married the daughter of a Taira noble, married into the clan of his enemies. Very quickly after his death that error worked the ruin of his house. His widow's relatives compassed the death of his two sons and obtained control of the Kamakura government. These new administrators are known as the "Hojo." They were, in fact, a branch of the Taira. The Court in Kyoto, still smarting under the recollection of Kiyomori's arbitrary haughtiness, and not yet reconciled to the open establishment of the dual system of government, made an effort to overthrow the



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Kamakura *Shoguns*, and failed signally. The Hojo chieftains entered Kyoto at the head of a victorious army, and signalised their triumph by compelling the Emperor to abdicate in favour of his cousin, and by banishing, to long distances from the capital, three ex-emperors to whose initiative they attributed the disturbance. Yoritomo had been careful to preserve a semblance of administrative association with the Imperial Court. The Hojo gave themselves no such concern. They left to the Fujiwara a few empty titles, and, establishing themselves at two positions in Kyoto, conducted the affairs of the central government independently of the Court, while from Kamakura they controlled the local administrations. But the Hojo also were drawn into the orbit that involved fatal collision with the Throne. Their political principle was *Divide et impera*. They rendered the Fujiwara clan impotent for purposes of resistance by separating it into five branches, each of which was to hold the office of Regent (*Kwampaku*) in succession.

It has already been explained that the *Kwampaku*, once the chief repository of administrative



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power, had been stripped of all real authority from the time when the military nobles attained the ascendancy. Nevertheless, he remained always the first subject in the realm, and neither the Taira nor the Minamoto ever attempted to wrest from the Fujiwara the honour of inheriting that illustrious title. Its possession became, however, a source of weakness rather than of strength to the Fujiwara when their five branches were placed on an equal footing of heirship. The Hojo were able to apply their system even to the occupants of the throne. It is unnecessary to trace in detail the incidents that created so unique an opportunity for the Hojo. Dealing with broad outlines only, we may confine ourselves to saying that the *Shogun* Sadatoki, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, found himself in a position to apportion the right of succession between two lines of the Imperial family, and to decide that their representatives should reign alternately, each for ten years. Such interference in affairs traditionally removed far beyond the reach of any subject's meddling could not fail to produce fatal results. Thirty



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years sufficed to precipitate a crisis. The Hojo *Shogun* had to choose between the breakdown of the sacrilegious system and an even more sacrilegious alternative, the dethronement and exile of a reigning sovereign. He chose the latter course, and did not shrink from force in carrying it out. That was the signal for the overthrow of the Hojo. Once more the Minamoto rose in arms and the Hojo were destroyed. These events happened in 1333 A. D. With it the Kamakura era closed. Thereafter ensued a period of fifty-nine years, one of the most miserable in Japanese history. It is known as the era of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, the representatives of two lines of the Imperial family claiming and holding the sceptre simultaneously, the whole country being divided into two camps, and a state of warfare perpetually existing. At last, in 1392, the struggle ceased temporarily, and the Ashikaga *Shoguns* became the repositories of power. The period of their sway is called the Muromachi epoch, from the fact that their seat of authority was at Muromachi in Kyoto. Very soon the question of the Imperial succession



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again threw the nation into a tumult, and the demoralising effects of these almost continuous eras of battle and violence began to be shown in the careers of military leaders, each of whom fought for his own hand, giving himself no concern about any government, whether that of *Shogun* or that of sovereign, and allying himself with whatever party seemed most likely to promote his selfish ambition. If the annals of that era be read closely, they present a spectacle of the worst passions in the repertoire of human nature. Bravery there was indeed—splendid bravery—supplemented by sagacity, strategic ability, promptitude in action, and sometimes magnificent devotion. But more prominent were treachery, intrigue, merciless cruelty, the loosening of all bonds of natural affection, and the exercise of unscrupulous cunning. “In short,” as recent Japanese historians have written, “wealth and strength had become the only guiding principles in that era of perpetual combat. The histories of the Taira, of the Minamoto, of the Hojo, and of the Ashikaga had insensibly established the creed that a prize scarcely





KEYSTONE HOTEL, N. Y. C.



## JAPAN

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KIYOMIZU TEMPLE, KYOTO.







## MEDIAEVAL JAPAN

inferior to the sceptre itself lay within reach of any noble whose territorial influence and military resources enabled him to grasp it." While the provinces thus echoed the tramp of armies; while the merchants and peasants were constantly required to supply money for the conduct of campaigns, and while robbery and pillage still further impoverished the country, the Ashikaga *Shoguns* were living lives of historical luxury and splendour in Kyoto.

At the end of the fourteenth century Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, who had retired from official life and ceded his functions to his son, built for himself a residence which remains to this day a monument of refined elegance and lavish expenditure. The materials, contributed by provincial governors and territorial magnates, were the choicest that Japan could furnish. The best artists of the day were engaged upon its decoration. The columns, doors and ceilings were strewn so profusely with dust of gold that when the edifice was thrown open to the light of day, after the airy fashion of Japanese buildings, it glowed from base to summit. Men called it



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*Kinkaku-ji*, or the golden pavilion. As for the state in which its princely inmate lived, his banquets, his musicians, his dancers, his pictures, his porcelains, his silks, his lacquers, his jade, his jewels, his crystals, his lights-of-love and his courtiers,—they were on a scale that tradition describes in terms probably accurate enough but too elaborate for the purposes of any sober narrative. The eighth of the Ashikaga *Shoguns*, Yoshimasa, whose record is unredeemed by the high military and administrative abilities that Yoshimitsu displayed, exceeded the latter in everything that makes for self-indulgence, extravagance and luxury. He built a “Silver Pavilion” to rival the “Golden Pavilion” of Yoshimitsu; he established for himself the reputation of a dilettante in whose eyes the acquisition of an object of *virtu* justified any sacrifice; and he carried the gratification of the senses to such a pitch that, in order to suggest the coolness of a snow scene in summer moonlight, he caused a range of hills to be carpeted with white silk. Yoshimasa lived to see other sights besides his “Silver Pavilion” and his



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summer snow. He lived to see Kyoto converted into an eleven years' battlefield. Combats occurred every day and were accompanied by numerous conflagrations. The Imperial palace, the mansions of the nobles, the residences and warehouses of the citizens and many of the largest temples were burned to the ground. Books and documents and many invaluable heirlooms, transmitted from ancient times, were destroyed. The once splendid city was reduced to a state of desolation and ruin. The military and civilian classes alike were plunged in poverty. The laws were not operative. The administration of justice was in disorder. The Muromachi *Shoguns* had lived on the principle *après nous le déluge*, and the deluge duly came, reducing Kyoto to a heap of ruins and burying the debauched dynasty under the *débris*.

With these facts before us we are in a position to refer to a distinction advanced by Japanese historians, the distinction of *Kuge* customs and *Buke* customs. The *Kuge* customs are those that prevailed in the Imperial capital during the Nara and Heian epochs; the *Buke* customs are



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those inaugurated and practised by the military nobles and their followers during the Kamakura epoch, to be succeeded by the *Kuge* customs once more at the close of the Muromachi era. Briefly stated, it is a distinction between effeminacy, dilettanteism, devotion to literature, poetry and caligraphy, perfunctoriness in the discharge of official duties, contempt for the soldier's calling and excessive zeal in the cause of religion, on the one hand, and on the other, simplicity of life and habits, rigid discipline, the practice of martial exercises, and the avoidance of everything tending to enervate the body or undermine the principles of loyalty, fidelity and gratitude as displayed in the relations between lord and vassal. Undoubtedly the distinction found practical illustration in the life of the *Samurai*, especially *Samurai* of the middle and lower ranks, whose comparatively insignificant position kept them beyond the range of intrigue or inordinate ambition. The *Samurai*, or the *Bushi*, as he preferred to call himself, was an ideal soldier. The one object that occupied the vista of all his acts and aims was the advancement of his feudal chief's interests. He



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knew neither parents, brothers, sisters, wife nor children until the dictates of fealty were satisfied. His life, not less than the service of his sword, was held payable to his lord on demand. He had his code of honour, of which the first tenet was that a *Bushi* never lied; and he had his code of etiquette, which instructed him how to comport himself whether in the presence of his superiors or in the face of death. He obeyed the dictates of politeness even before crossing weapons with a foe. He never shrank from combat, and he was always ready to expiate a fault by suicide. He had his faults, of course. Conspicuous among them was cruel contempt for any one that did not follow the calling of arms. He had no objection that his wife and children should carry on domestic industries to eke out the generally scanty pay that he received from his lord, and he would even join in the task of bread-winning himself. But he treated the farmer, the mechanic and the trader—above all the trader—with the bluntest haughtiness, and held their lives barbarously cheap. Yet, on the whole, it is doubtful whether any country has produced a man better



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fitted for warlike purposes, or less prone, in moments of victory, to the grosser excesses that have disgraced the soldiers of other countries in all ages. The *Bushi* of Japan often used his sword mercilessly, but it is nowhere on record that he ever yielded to the impulses of lust in the hour of brute force's triumph.

Something of the same indifference to the affairs of the commoner manifested itself in the administration of the great military nobles. They left the farmer in undisturbed possession of his holding, encouraged the mechanic's pursuit of his craft, and refrained from interference in the business of the merchant. But they did not hesitate to make forced levies in coin and kind on all three classes when necessity arose, and it scarcely occurred to them that any account need be taken of the *Heimin* (commoner) in their legislation. In a code of fifty-one laws, framed by direction of the Hojo Yasutoki (1250 A. D.), provisions relating to the agricultural, manufacturing and mercantile orders are virtually absent. The legislator seems to have considered that his duty did not extend beyond furnishing a body of rules for



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the settlement of all questions that might arise among the Kamakura feudatories and vassals. The limits of authority legitimately devolving upon provincial governors and territorial nobles, certain points relating to the promotion and retirement of magnates, general ordinances with reference to land, to succession, to property, to civil suits, to marriage, to rebellion, to murder and to lesser crimes—these were the only things taken account of by Yasutoki's lawgivers. They did not even publish the code, such as it was. Nothing brings into stronger prominence the absence of any theory of popular rights than this habit of private legislation. It really did not matter, in the *Bushi's* opinion, whether the *Heimin* knew or did not know what kind of treatment he might expect at the hands of the law in a given contingency. The fellow must be satisfied, anyhow. He could learn the ethics of daily life by listening to the sermons of Buddhist priests, and he ought to know by tradition that his first duty was to be docile and submissive. Laws were for the assistance of rulers, and had the further use of securing uniformity of procedure, which was



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desirable as a means of inspiring respect. The commoner had nothing to do with law except to suffer the penalties that it imposed on him. Nevertheless, the same Yasutoki transmitted to posterity the reputation of a ruler who displayed toward the people most urbane consideration, and neglected no means of winning their affection; whose career was never disfigured by any passionate excesses, and whose use of power never degenerated into abuse.

The establishment of military feudalism and the prevalence of the *Buke* customs during the Kamakura epoch exercised an influence that may be traced in all departments of the nation's life. Literature, of course, suffered conspicuously. The art of war attracted a large part of the attention hitherto bestowed upon the study of the Confucian philosophy, and it became more important to wield a sword deftly and shoot an arrow straight than to trace an ideograph or illuminate a missal. It is recorded that, in the days of the Hojo supremacy, men of note no longer reckoned among their most honourable accomplishments facility in turning





A BUDDHIST PRIEST.



## JAL 45

and the means of preparing respect. The subject was left to do with as except a temporary restriction was imposed on him. The subject was a V-necked shirt sold to a young girl of a ruler who displayed a very high most intense concentration and a number of winning their affective; the subject was covered by any possible excess of power whose use of power never generated a doubt.

The establishment of military feudalism had the influence of the *Buke* customs during the Kamakura epoch exercised an influence that may be traced in all departments of the nation's life. Literature, of course, suffered conspicuously. Literature of war attracted a large part of the attention hitherto bestowed upon the study of the Confucian philosophy, and it became more important to wield a sword deftly than to shoot an arrow straight than to trace a character or illuminate a passage. It is recorded that during the days of the Heiō supremacy, men no longer reckoned among their most important accomplishments facility in turning





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a couplet or composing a classical phrase. The fencing school, the manage and the archery range engrossed a large part of the *Busha's* attention, and when leisure could be snatched from military training the favourite pursuits were hunting, hawking, wrestling and the equestrian performances called *inuoi* and *yabusame*, of which we shall speak more fully by and by. The university in Kyoto and the schools which had been established by the *Kuge* in the provinces gradually deteriorated for lack of patronage, and officialdom gave itself no concern about this decay of the educational machinery. Education, it must be remembered, was among the privileges of the *Samurai* class; commoners had no need of it. Thus the disappearance of educational facilities became a matter of no consequence when the *Samurai's* business in life was to be a soldier, not a student. A library established at Kanazawa by Hojo Akitoki in 1816 is said to have been the only official contribution to literary resources during the Kamakura epoch. It may be broadly stated that the vicissitudes of Kyoto were reflected in the vicissitudes of litera-



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ture. So soon as Kyoto ceased to be the centre of political power, literature declined ; so soon as Kyoto recovered its metropolitan character, literature revived. From the castles of the Minamoto and the Hojo at Kamakura and Odawara no patronage was extended to education or scholarship, but at the palace of the Ashikaga in Muromachi men of learning, poets and historians generally found encouragement. The Buddhist priests, however, never flagged in their pursuit of learning. They made frequent voyages to China for purposes of study, and from time to time invited Chinese *literati* to visit and reside in Japan. Thus gradually the priests came to be regarded as the sole repositories of classical knowledge, and there was brought about a state of affairs precisely analogous to that which existed in Europe during mediæval, and even comparatively modern, eras, when the functions of advice in civil affairs, the drafting of documents and the interpretation of books fell almost entirely to churchmen, and when the only means of obtaining an education was to enlist the services of a priest. Of the



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effect that the development of the *Buke* customs produced upon the literary compositions of the time we shall speak in due place.

In striking contrast to the decline of literature was the development of art during the Kamakura and Muromachi epochs. The crafts of the sword-smith and the armorer certainly deserve to be included in this category, for the weapons of offence and defence that Japanese artisans began to produce from the twelfth century are justly ranked among objects of *virtu* by Western connoisseurs of our own days. From the time of the Emperor Gotoba (1186–1197), who, after abdicating in favour of his son, as was the fashion of that era, made the forging and tempering of sword blades his unique pastime, the craftsmen of Japan learned to manipulate iron and steel with unparalleled dexterity. It is enough to say here that the annals of the *Kamakura* epoch are inscribed with the names of Masamune and Myochin, and that the Goto family then began to chisel those marvellous pictures in iron, steel, copper, silver, gold, *shakudo* and *shibuichi* which, as



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examples of glyptic skill applied to metals, are absolutely without peers in the productions of any country. A curious trait of the character of the Japanese in mediæval times is that, while battle and bloodshed constituted the business of their daily lives, all the paraphernalia for the indulgence of those primitive passions breathed a spirit of the most artistic refinement. As for the arts of the painter, the lacquerer, the potter, the architect and the sculptor, the chapter of their history that now opens must be treated independently; but the nature of their development may be generally inferred from the facts that in this era the Golden Pavilion of Yoshimitsu and the Silver Pavilion of Yoshimasa were constructed, and that Kamakura saw the casting of that wonderful image of Buddha, the celebrated *Daibutsu*, concerning which it has been well said that "no other Japanese work of art gives such an impression of majesty, or so truly symbolises the central idea of Buddhism—the intellectual calm which comes of perfected knowledge and the subjugation of all passion."



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Kamakura, which in the days of the Minamoto and the Hojo is said to have contained a million inhabitants, became, from the thirteenth century, the centre of trade as of politics. A considerable measure of order had by that time been introduced into the realm of commerce. Seven kinds of markets existed, and merchants were able to transport their wares on horseback throughout the provinces, though not without peril of bandits, who had their haunts in the mountains, from whence they issued with singular boldness to the attack of wayfarers and the rifling of houses. The exploits of some of these robbers, their daring, their skill in the use of weapons, and the desperate devices to which they resorted, form the nucleus of many a thrilling legend. As a rule they avoided crossing the path of the *Bushi*, but occasionally they did not shrink from a manœuvre the conception of which had apparently been imported from Korea; they assumed the disguise of officials and collected "aids" from the peasantry and the merchants, who in those days neither argued nor asked questions in the presence of *Samurai*.



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The law of supply and demand received no recognition at the hands of the feudal administrators. If the staples of daily consumption showed any tendency to rise to inconvenient prices, they were quickly pulled down by official edict to a comfortable level. Interference of that nature, however paternal the motives that originally dictated it, soon came to be exercised in the interests of the individual official almost as much as in those of consumers at large. The peasant or the merchant, learning that his prosperity depended in great measure on the degree of benevolence he could evoke among "the honourable upper folk," approached the task with whatever weapons of persuasion his purse could supply, and considered such manoeuvres perfectly legitimate since they received the practical sanction of the aristocracy.

Amid much that was civilised, refined and astute, a notably unprogressive feature of the time was the absence of convenient media of exchange. Gold and silver were obtained in abundance from mines in Japan, as well as from China and Korea, but they were not used for



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purposes of coinage. The only monetary tokens in the hands of the people were copper and iron cash, struck in China under the Sung dynasty, and similar coins of Japanese minting. These were strung upon straw plaits, a hundred constituting a string, and a hundred strings went to the *riyo*, a monetary unit which then existed on paper only, but subsequently came to be represented by portly ellipsoids of the precious metals. Some idea may be formed of the exceedingly economical habits of the lower orders in mediæval Japan when we note that their unit of value, the cash or *mon*, was the thousandth part of the modern *yen*; that is to say, the two thousandth part of an American gold dollar. Three or four of these little fragments of iron or copper constituted a reasonable donation to the money chest of a temple or shrine, or an alms for which a beggar bowed his head in the dust. Another medium of exchange was grass cloth (*jofu*), a hempen fabric highly prized by the upper classes. It was with rolls of this delicate material that the peasant or merchant usually armed himself when he desired to court



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official favour. As a further illustration of the importance attaching to money, we may note that a difference existed in the purchasing powers of Chinese and Japanese cash. One would imagine that account could scarcely have been taken of the relative value of tokens intrinsically so valueless. But the thrifty Japanese scrutinised things more closely, and in 1198 A. D. an edict was issued interdicting the use of Chinese cash so as to obviate confusion in fixing the market prices of staples. That attempt to introduce a purely national currency did not succeed, however, for seventy-three years later we find the Hojo Regent, Tokimune, sending Japanese gold to China for the purpose of purchasing Chinese cash. One inevitable result of such clumsy media was that the difficulty of transporting them soon suggested bills of exchange for transactions between distant places. It is true that transactions of that kind constituted a very small element in the commerce of the time, but they grew with the growth of the fiefs and the consequent development of local prosperity. Credit, however, had not yet







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the same matter in a statement of the  
Ministry of Finance. In this way, we may note  
the fact that the Chinese element in the purchasing  
power of the Japanese yen and Japanese coin. One  
thing is certain, however, that it could scarcely have  
been otherwise, in view of the value of tokens in  
the Chinese market. But the thrifty Japa-  
nese have not taken things more closely, and on  
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SPINNING COTTON.







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received much recognition as a factor in the promotion of commerce and industry. Transactions of borrowing and lending took place on a large scale, indeed, but they were connected with personal, rather than with business convenience, and their nature is inferable from a law which limited the period of a loan to one year and the rate of interest to fifty per cent. In the middle of the thirteenth century, this law was supplemented by an edict that the principal of a debt must not increase with lapse of time, and that the interest must not be raised above the figure entered in the original note. It is recorded that loans were generally made in that era at a monthly interest of from five to eight per cent, and that some kind of security was required in most cases, garments, articles of furniture, objects of art, or swords being the common form of pledge. Land, also, might be mortgaged, but not for a longer period than twenty years. That debts contracted within such limits should become insupportably onerous was inevitable, and in the time of Yoshimasa, that is to say, at the close of the fifteenth century, riots



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occurred more than once in Kyoto, the sole purpose of the rioters being to destroy the certificates of debt preserved in the strong rooms of usurers and men of wealth.

Concerning trade beyond the territorial waters of Japan up to the tenth century there is not much to be said. It was limited to transactions of a fitful character with China and Korea. In connection with this subject it has to be noted that the art of navigation remained in a comparatively backward state among the Japanese long after their general progress in other directions had become very marked. The use of sails does not appear to have been known, or, at any rate, was not appreciated, until the sixteenth century. Oars were the only means of propulsion, as many as a hundred being sometimes employed, though the usual number for sea-going, that is to say, coasting, vessels was from forty to fifty-eight. A voyage to China in a rowboat was an enterprise too perilous to be lightly undertaken. Moreover, Japanese subjects did not enjoy liberty in the field of foreign commerce. They were forbidden to carry merchan-



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dise to China without special permission, and if they disregarded the veto they usually encountered difficulties at the port of entry, for in China also official restrictions existed, and unless provided with a passport, the foreign trader found himself in a dilemma. It does not appear that the embargo thus put upon commerce had its motive in any desire for national seclusion. The true reason was that officials preferred to monopolise the business themselves. Several instances are recorded of punishment inflicted on Japanese subjects [in the tenth or eleventh centuries for crossing to China with cargoes of merchandise; but in spite of such obstacles the trade grew gradually, so that in the thirteenth century a considerable outward and inward movement of goods took place at Takata in the province of Chikuzen, and at Bonotsu in the province of Satsuma,—the former being the port for Korea, and the latter that for China. According to Japanese annals, the staples of import from China were raw silk, indigo, Indian ink, porcelain and matting; and those from Japan were rice, other cereals and timber. But in Chinese annals



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articles of so-called "tribute" received from Japan at the close of the eleventh century are registered as a silver censer, *mukoroshi* berries, white glass, five scents, crystals, red sandal-wood, amber rosaries, coloured satin and quicksilver.

The great Taira chieftain Kiyomori (1170 A. D.) appreciated the benefits of foreign commerce, and would fain have encouraged transactions with China. To that end he sought to promote intercourse with the neighbouring empire, though he refrained from any attempt to renew the system of official embassies interrupted three hundred years previously. He also planned and carried out extensive improvements of the harbour at Hyogo (Kobe), now the second of the open ports of Japan in point of importance. Doubtless his object was to substitute Hyogo for Hakata and Bonotsu as a port of entry for Chinese goods, in order to divert to the central treasury the taxes and duties levied locally upon the trade, and in order, also, to secure its direct control, a highly profitable monopoly. But Kiyomori soon had to turn his attention solely to his own defence, and his policy of commercial





A LOTUS GARDEN.



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articles, so-called "tribute" received from the Chinese. The close of the eleventh century are ascribed to a silver censer, *mukoroshi* berries, a pair of silver incense-burners, crystals, red sandal-wood, and a robe of blue and gold satin and quicksilver.

It was the great chief Yamato Kiyomori (1119-1159) who appreciated the benefits of foreign commerce, and who would have encouraged transactions with China. To that end he sought to put Japan on a par with the neighbouring empire, though he refrained from any attempt to renew the system of official embassies interrupted three hundred years previously. He also planned and carried out extensive improvements of the harbour at Hyogo (Kobe), now the second of the open ports of Japan in point of importance. Doubtless his object was to substitute Hyogo for Hakata and Bonotsu as a port of entry for Chinese goods, in order to divert to the central treasury the taxes and duties levied locally upon foreign trade, and in order, also, to secure its direct control, a highly profitable monopoly. But Kiyomori soon had to turn his attention solely to his own defence, and his policy of commercial





A LOTUS GARDEN.







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expansion was not pursued by his successors. It is recorded that several overtures for the re-establishment of official relations between the neighbouring empires were made by sovereigns of the *Sung* dynasty, but they met with no encouragement in Japan. In the year 1254 A. D., we find the Hojo Regent, Tokiyori, limiting to five the number of vessels engaged in commerce with China, issuing special licenses to those five, and ordering that any unlicensed boat which encroached upon the commerce should be burned. Tokiyori's restrictions did not prove efficient. Neither the Governor of Kyūshū, within whose immediate jurisdiction the port of Hakata lay, nor the Konoye nobles who ruled in Satsuma, were disposed to forego the profits of the trade in deference to an order from distant Kyoto. They obeyed nominally, but the number of vessels plying to and fro underwent no diminution.



## VIII

### YOSHITSUNE, GENGHIS AND THE MONGOL INVASION



**A**BOUT THIRTY YEARS BEFORE the issue of Tokiyori's veto limiting the number of ships engaged in trade with China, Japanese pirates began to renew their raids upon the Korean coast. The island of Tsushima was the home of these freebooters at the time (1227-1228 A. D.) when they re-directed their attention to the neighbouring peninsula, inaugurating a series of lawless acts destined to attain large dimensions in later eras, and to make the name of Japan a terror to all adjacent nations. The year noted for that event in Japanese history was marked by a far more memorable incident in the history of China—the death of Genghis Khan. Among many erudite Japanese there prevails with regard to that wonderful



## MONGOL INVASION

soldier a belief as romantic as it is interesting. They identify him with Yoshitsune, the young general by whose brilliant strategical talent the Taira power was broken and the Minamoto family placed at the head of the administration. To discuss such a question at anything like the length that its interest suggests would carry us beyond the scope of this work; but it cannot be left entirely unnoticed, seeing that with the name of Kublai, the grandson of Genghis, is associated the first invasion of Japan in historical times,—an invasion that for a moment threatened her national integrity, and from a terrible menace was converted, by the valour of her people, into a proud memory.

Yoshitsune was a baby in arms when the so-called “Hogen Insurrection” occurred and when his father, Yoshitomo, took part in that battle already spoken of; the battle against which a black mark is set in Japanese history as the most unnatural combat of all eras, two elder brothers fighting against two younger, a father against his son, and an uncle against his nephew. A one-day combat, occurring in the



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sequel of a series of minor struggles and intrigues, it resulted in the temporary annihilation of the influence hitherto wielded by the Minamoto clan, and in the transfer of administrative power to the Taira under the leadership of Kiyomori. The merciless custom of the era would have consigned to death all the leaders of the defeated clan and their scions. Yoshitomo, indeed, though he survived the battle, was afterwards foully slaughtered by a friend whose loyalty could not bear the test of misfortune, and of his five legitimate sons the fates may be briefly recorded as an illustrative page of the era's history. Yoshihira, the eldest, made prisoner in battle, was executed in Kyoto by order of Kiyomori. Tomonaga, the second, severely wounded by an arrow, and knowing that if he went out to fight he must fall into the enemy's hand, asked his father to kill him, and the request was complied with. Mareyoshi, the fourth, lived until the time when Yoritomo raised his standard in Izu, and then, knowing that Yoritomo had decided upon his death, committed suicide. Noriyori, the fifth, quar-





Figure 1. Canyon view.



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the years of military struggles and internal dissensions, the temporary annihilation of the power hitherto wielded by the Fujiwara family, and in the transfer of administration to the Taira under the leadership of Taira no Kiyomori. The merciless custom of the time was to have consigned to death all the members of a defeated clan and their sons. Yoshitomo, indeed, though he survived the battle, was afterwards foully slaughtered by a friend whose loyalty could not bear the test of misfortune, and of his five legitimate sons the fates may be briefly recorded as an illustrative page of the era's history. Yoshihira, the eldest, made prisoner in battle, was executed in Kyoto by order of Kiyomori. Tomonaga, the second, severely wounded by an arrow, and knowing that if he went out to fight he must fall into the enemy's hand, asked his father to kill him, and the request was complied with. Mareyoshi, the fourth, lived until the time when Yoritomo raised his standard in Izu, and then, knowing that Yoritomo had decided upon his death, committed suicide. Noriyori, the fifth, quar-





STONE ARCH ON MITAKE-YAMA, USUALLY CALLED ONTAKE.







## MONGOL INVASION

relled with Yoritomo after the latter's success, and being attacked by Yoritomo's general, Kajiware, killed himself. Thus the death of two of his brothers lay at Yoritomo's door. As for Yoritomo himself, he was saved by a singular chance. A lad of thirteen, he was placed in confinement pending the decision of the victors, and there is little doubt that all troublesome contingencies would have been effectually averted by his execution had not the stepmother of the Taira chief Kiyomori pleaded for his young life, being moved to pity by the likeness that he bore to a deceased child of her own. Banishment to the distant province of Izu was therefore substituted for death; an act of leniency bitterly requited twenty-one years later (1180 A. D.) when Yoritomo raised the white standard in the northeast, and commenced a campaign that ended in the complete overthrow of the Taira.

Yoshitsune was an illegitimate child of Yoshitomo. His mother, Tokiwa, a woman celebrated in Japanese history for her beauty, her courage and her misfortunes, receiving news of her



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husband's defeat and being warned of its thoroughness, fled through the snow in the early days of the year 1159, carrying Yoshitsune in her bosom and leading her two other boys by the hand. The circumstances of that terrible journey, the fate that pursued the three little lads, the love that lent such strength to the delicately nurtured, fair-faced mother, — all these things appealed so powerfully to the dramatic instinct of the Japanese that the poet, the painter, the sculptor in every succeeding age found a moving motive in the incident. We are not here concerned with the details of Tokiwa's tragedy — how she made good her escape but was subsequently induced to surrender herself and her sons by way of ransom for the life of her mother, then held a prisoner in the Tokiwa palace at Rokuhara; how another surrender, that of her own beautiful person to the embraces of Kiyomori, ransomed the lives of her children, and how, as time effaced her charms, she faded from the annals of her era until that flight through the snow and the darkness remained her sole title to be remembered by



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posterity. The two elder of her three sons took the tonsure and died in the cloister, "unhonoured and unsung." The youngest, Yoshitsune, destined also to chant litanies and intone *sutras*, was immured in the monastery of Kurama. But he never emerged from the acolyte stage. His earliest thoughts turned to things other than the altar and the stole; and before the repeated efforts of the Kurama monks had succeeded in bringing him under the yoke of the rosary, he made his escape to Oshiu by the assistance of a dealer in iron, whose services were rendered loyal by the memory of favours received at the hands of the Minamoto in past years. Before Yoshitsune left the monastery at Kurama, he had become a skilled swordsman. Strange legends are connected with that accomplishment. He is said to have received lessons from the mountain genii, the *Tengu*, or bird-faced beings of Japanese tradition, and we shall presently see that in that quaint fancy may possibly be traced one of the links connecting his identity with Genghis Khan. The northern part of the main island of Japan, owing to its distance and its



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comparative inaccessibility from Kyoto, enjoyed in those days a large measure of local autonomy, and Yoshitsune found not only refuge but also powerful patronage at the stronghold of Hidehira, one of the most puissant of the military chieftains then beginning to establish the semi-independent principalities of the feudal system. The Taira chief knew of this flight from the cloister at Kurama, but his arm was not long enough to reach to Oshiu.

Five years later (1180) there came to the hands of Yoritomo, the Izu exile, a mandate from the Imperial Court in Kyoto authorising him to take the field against the Taira, whose arrogance and arbitrariness had become intolerable. Yoshitsune, then only twenty-one, hastened from Oshiu to join his brother's standard, and, despite his youth, was placed in command of a large force, which subsequently marched westward, and in a series of campaigns the scene of which extended from the centre to the southern coast of the main island of Japan, won victory after victory, until the last remnants of the Taira strength were shattered at Dan-no-ura.





A FALLS IN THE MOUNTAINS



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Yoshitsune, driven by from Kyoto, enjoyed a measure of local autonomy, and not only refuge but a refuge at the stronghold of Minamoto no Yoritomo, the most puissant of the military leaders, who were trying to establish the supremacy of the Minamoto families of the feudal aristocracy. He knew of this flight to the north, but his arm was not strong enough to follow.

For years he had come to the help of Ashikaga Takauji, who had made him the lord of the province of Ise, and he was to take the command of the Taira, whose refuge and army he was to lead into the north. Yoshitsune, however, had been banished from Osaka upon the death of his son, and, despite his youth, was a famous and efficient force, who had repeatedly won battles, and in a series of campaigns the scene of his operations extended from the north to the south coast of the main island of Japan. In the end of his victory, much the last remnants of the Taira power were shattered at the battle of





A JAPANESE WATERFALL.







## MONGOL INVASION

Yoshitsune's achievements in this war deserved all the fame that they earned. The rapidity with which he delivered his strokes, the strategical insight and the wise daring of his plans showed him to be what his nation calls him, a general without any peer in the annals of Japan. Hideyoshi, who alone disputes the palm with Yoshitsune, won great battles and displayed splendid resources of talent in the field. But with Hideyoshi craft was a factor as potent as force. He enlisted all the potentialities of intrigue in his cause, and never intrusted to the sword any issue that could be controlled from the cabinet. It may be claimed that Hideyoshi's methods showed the highest instinct of genius, perfect concord with the circumstances of his time. But that contention belongs to another class of considerations. The point is that in all the qualities of pure soldiership Yoshitsune stands, if not absolutely pre-eminent, certainly unsurpassed. The artists of his country, to whom his adventures have furnished many a subject for delineation in painting or sculpture, endow him with a lithe, firmly knit but eminently graceful frame, and



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features of almost feminine beauty. In reality he was a short, strongly built and singularly active man, and whatever claim to comeliness he possessed was marred by prominent front teeth. Among his stanchest vassals the names of two have not only become household words in Japan, but find also a place in the strange chapter of Mongol-Japanese history which we are now specially considering. They are Saito Benkei and Washi-no-o Saburo. Of the latter we need not say more than that he shared all Yoshitsune's confidences and followed him in all his fortunes. Of the former every one interested in Japanese history should know that, though reared in a monastery and intended for a priestly career, he became a species of roving fighter, and being blessed with vast strength, an advantage which he supplemented by remarkable skill in the use of a weapon then very formidable, the glaive, he was able to pursue for a time a career of lawless violence in Kyoto. There, by some train of events not clearly defined in history, Benkei came into collision with Yoshitsune, who was then visiting the city in disguise, and there



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ensued a combat destined to be immortalised on the stage of Japan, on the silk of her painters and in the work of her sculptors.<sup>1</sup> It was fought on a bridge, and so extraordinary were the feats of agility opposed by Yoshitsune to the onsets of the giant glaivesman, that in traditional representations of the scene the future conqueror of the Taira is shown traversing the narrow balustrade of the bridge on wooden pattens. Worst of his youthful opponent, Benkei swore fealty to Yoshitsune, and held the oath sacred until death.

Yoshitsune's meteoric career could not fail to create many enmities. Traded to his brother Yoritomo by a rival who held high place in the latter's confidence, the conqueror of the Taira became an object of suspicion. Yoritomo secretly despatched from Kamakura an emissary to compass his death, but the would-be assassin fell under the sword of his intended victim. That event had been preceded by various efforts on Yoshitsune's part to dispel his brother's suspicions. There is no reason to suppose that

<sup>1</sup> "Hashi-Benkei," or "Benkei and the bridge," is the name by which the combat is known in the field of art.



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treasonable designs were really entertained by the young general. But when he found that the dagger of a murderer was the kind of message he had to expect from Kamakura, he openly assumed the offensive and obtained an Imperial edict authorising him to take up arms against Yoritomo. The Kamakura ruler had laid his plans so astutely, however, that before the edict could be obeyed it was revoked and replaced by a mandate to all the provincial authorities directing them to arrest Yoshitsune wherever discovered. Yoshitsune fled to Oshiu, and found refuge with his old patron, Hidehira. Four years later Hidehira died, and his son, Yasuhira, receiving from Kamakura an order bearing the seals of the sovereign and the *Shogun*, took measures for the destruction of Yoshitsune, and, placing his head in a tub of *saké* (rice spirit), sent it to Kamakura, where it was inspected and nominally identified forty-three days later.

Such are the outlines of the story as traced in the pages of generally accredited history. The *gundan*, or war tales, with which Japanese *raconteurs* entertain audiences, according to a fashion





WOODEN RESORT AT IWAKUNI



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Yoshihide and his family entered the country by the back door, and when he returned to the country, a messenger was the kind of messenger who came from Kamakura, he openly declared his intentions and obtained an Imperial order for him to take up arms against the Minamoto. The Kamakura ruler had held his power, however, that before the edict was issued it was revoked and replaced by an order from the provincial authorities directed to the governor of Oshiu, wherever discovered Yoshihide, he should be arrested and sent to Oshiu, and found refuge in the province of Oshiu, Hidechika. Four years later Yoshihide and his son, Yasuhira, receiving from the Imperial order bearing the seals of the sovereign, the *Shogun*, took measures for the destruction of Yoshihide, and, placing his head on a pole of sorcery spirit), sent it to Kamakura. The head was inspected and nominally identified as the head of Yoshihide.

The details of the story as traced in the Japanese histories of generally accredited history. The story is a war tale, with which Japanese *raconteurs* entertain audiences, according to a fashion





WOODEN BRIDGE AT IWAKUNI.







## MONGOL INVASION

inaugurated centuries ago, embody vivid records of Yoshitsune's tragic end. Imagination is doubtless responsible for some, perhaps many, of the details thus poured into the ears of eager listeners; but whatever deductions have to be made on that score, it will not be uninteresting to reproduce here an account compiled from the *gundan* as showing the kind of picture that tradition draws of the warriors of the twelfth century and their manner of fighting and dying. The scene is laid in Oshiu, and the time is that immediately subsequent to the death of the old chieftain Hidehira.

"Of Hidehira's sons the eldest, Yorihiro, far excelled his brothers in physical and mental endowments. Few of the northern *Bushi* could hold their own against him with bow or sword, and partly from that cause, partly for the sake of his frank and loyal nature, Yoshitsune had conceived for him a friendship which the old chief's death strengthened rather than diminished. Yorihiro had been born before his father was sixteen years of age, and thus, though well fitted to succeed to the control of the fief, it had been



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considered expedient to set him aside in favour of his younger brother, Yasuhira. He himself had never rebelled against the decision. It seemed to him right and natural, nor did he much care to whom the title descended provided it remained among his own kith and kin. But his complaisance, being difficult to understand, was suspicious. His brothers could not believe him content, and finding fresh grounds for mistrust in his intimacy with the Minamoto exiles, they resolved to set the question at rest once and forever. An opportunity was easily found. On the hundredth day after Hidehira's death, when the family had assembled to perform due ceremonials, Yorihiro was treacherously seized and executed with all his children.

“Yoshitsune did not fail to perceive the bearing of that act upon his own fortunes. When setting out from Heian-jo three years previously, he had received from the Emperor an autograph letter empowering him to claim the armed assistance of the brothers Koreto and Koreyoshi, two of the most puissant nobles in the Island of the Nine Provinces. That letter he now despatched



## MONGOL INVASION

southward with an explanation of his helpless condition and an account of the perils menacing him. Whether Yoshitsune was betrayed, or Yoritomo exceptionally well served, the letter fell into the latter's hands, and its import being misinterpreted and largely exaggerated, supplied Yoshitsune's enemies with a fresh pretext for urging his destruction. The *Shogun* desired to despatch an army northward without delay; but it was pointed out to him by Kagiwara and other not less astute commanders that such a proceeding would compel Yasuhira to espouse the proscribed man's cause, and that with Yoshitsune as their general the Oshiu troops might hold all Japan at bay for a century. It was resolved, therefore, to adopt a more subtle method. A delegate from the Court of Kamakura arrived in Oshiu, empowered to exchange the fief of Hitachi in perpetuity against the head of the Minamoto fugitive. Thus, before the days of mourning for Hidehira were completed, the things he had foretold came about.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hidehira on his deathbed had foretold that Yoshitsune's safety depended on the uncompromising rejection of all overtures from Kamakura.



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“Hidehira’s death had taken place in the month of December, and in May of the following year his sons organised a hunting expedition on an exceptionally large scale. Yoshitsune was invited to join the party, and being as yet without any definite cause to distrust, he readily consented. He was ignorant of his own messenger’s miscarriage as well as of the southern delegate’s coming, and neither he nor his followers seem to have had any suspicion of treachery. But just as he rode out of Koromo-gawa a letter was placed in his hands. It bore the signature of Motonari Hidehira’s father-in-law, and this was its purport:

“‘The dying prediction approaches its fulfilment: an envoy from Kamakura reached Oshiu five days ago. Your own ignorance of the event will enable you to divine the nature of his reception. In this hunting expedition you are yourself the quarry. I pray that it be not already too late for you to fly. Brother of the man<sup>1</sup> for whose sake your father died, and your fellow

<sup>1</sup> Nobuyori, whose feud with Kiyomori led to the downfall of the Genji.





MEN DOX OR "FIMMIE TAD" AT LOP



11

Yoshitsune had taken place in the  
month of May of the following  
year, and he led a hunting expedition  
into the mountains. Yoshitsune re-  
mained in the capital and being as yet a  
young man, he, to be sure, he readily  
believed the report of his own messenger  
concerning the western de-  
legation, and his followers se-  
cured the proof of treachery. He  
thereupon wrote a letter  
bearing the signature  
of Minamoto no Yoritomo, and this

"The dying man," he approaches its  
 "an enemy," and "has reached a  
 "sudden. We are the source of the  
 "able you to do it, the source of  
 "In this matter, a position you  
 "the query. I pray that it be not  
 "late for you to try. Brother of the  
 "where sake your father died, and your

above field with Kyanite due to the density





MEN-DAKI OR "FEMALE FALL" AT KŌBE.







## MONGOL INVASION

exile, I would follow you wherever you turn your steps, but that may not be, seeing that my years now number more than three-score. May Hachiman guide you to some better fortune.'

"Yoshitsune read these words without betraying surprise or alarm. 'At home or at the hunt, it matters little which,' he said, as he turned back, 'the end is the same wherever it overtakes us.' Then summoning his sixteen liegemen, he read to them Motonari's letter, and caused Benkei to write this reply:

"'If it were in my power to escape, I might persuade myself to make the attempt, in order that men should not be able to lay this crime to their charge whose father placed me under so large a debt of gratitude. But both I and my companions have had overmuch of flight and evasions. Neither in heaven nor earth is there any place whither the ban of proscription does not reach. Here, therefore, we shall await our fate whatever it may be, grieving only that we can neither repay your kindness nor profit by it.'

"To this resolution every one of the sixteen assented unhesitatingly. Since the end was in-



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evitable, the remnant of their lives might be passed more comfortably where they were than in repeating the bitter experiences of bygone years. Nevertheless, for their leader's wife and child they would fain have devised some means of escape. Among the mountains of Nikkwo, where Saburo's youth had been spent, perhaps in the very place where Iné, Saburo's wife, had received her unknown visitor in the days when the future was bright, some retreat might still be found beyond the reach of vengeance and intrigue. For such a purpose as this Saburo could not but consent to survive his lord, and with him as escort the chances of successful flight did not seem small. But when this scheme was made known to Shigeko, she prayed with such earnestness not to be separated from her husband, that Yoshitsune could not find it in his heart to insist.

“Nothing therefore remained but to await the course of events with what patience they might. They did not attempt to make any preparations for defence, or even to devise a plan of action. It was tacitly understood that they should sell



## MONGOL INVASION

their lives as dearly as possible, and for the rest, they had fought side by side so often and in such sudden emergencies that to take any forethought now seemed scarcely necessary. Yoshitsune issued no directions, nor in any way changed his manner of life. One indication only of his purpose was afforded. He caused a number of fagots to be piled under the verandas of the main building, and desired that means to ignite them should be kept in constant readiness.

“On the morning of the third day after the receipt of Motonari’s letter, the watchman reported the appearance of a large body of troops to the south of Koromo-gawa. They were advancing at a leisurely pace and evidently with no desire to conceal their approach, which, indeed, it would have been difficult to do, seeing that their numbers amounted to some fifteen thousand. Fully an hour, however, must still elapse before the head of the column came within bowshot, and in the interim the sixteen Minamoto soldiers assembled to take leave of their leader and one another. The ceremony was conducted after the simplest fashion and



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without any display of emotion or any allusion to their impending fate. Benkei only, as he received the wine cup from Yoshitsune's hands and drained it for the last time, said with his old jovial laugh: 'The varlets have done us much honour in measuring our strength at one to a thousand. May we have proved to them before we, comrades, meet again that their estimate was not mistaken!'

"Yoshitsune, who had not yet armed himself, now desired his followers to ascertain, if they might, who were the leaders of the attacking force. He did not believe it possible that Yasuhira and his brother could have persuaded themselves to conduct so nefarious an enterprise in person, and finding his conjecture correct, he declared his intention of abstaining altogether from the fight. He would not draw his sword for the last time, he said, against those who were only obeying the orders of their superiors, or receive his death-stroke at the hands of men unworthy of his steel. The others did not attempt to turn him from his decision. They knew that it could not be otherwise, and





A JAPANESE WRESTLER.



without the least suggestion or any allusion to their superior strength. Benkei only, as he received the blow from a Yoshitsune's hands and drained a little of his life, said with his old level tongue, "It is a wonder we have done us much harm in the same manner strength at one to a hundred. May we have proved to them before we depart, nevertheless, that their estimate was not mistaken!"

"Yoshitsune, who had not yet armed himself, now desired his followers to ascertain, if they might, who were the leaders of the attacking force. He did not believe it possible that Yasahira and his brother could have persuaded themselves to conduct so nefarious an enterprise against a person, and finding his conjecture correct, he declared his intention of abstaining altogether from the fight. He would not draw his sword for the last time, he said, against those who were only obeying the orders of their superiors, or receive his death-stroke at the hands of a man unworthy of his steel. The others did not attempt to turn him from his decision. They knew that it could not be otherwise, and





A JAPANESE WRESTLER.







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one by one as they took their leave they asked his pardon for preceding him to the grave. Even now they did not hold any consultation about the disposition of their force. By a sort of tacit understanding fourteen mounted their horses and rode toward the gate, while the remaining two ascended to the roof of the main building and stood there sword in hand. Of these, one was the uncle of Yoshitsune's wife. He was the only man of their leader's kindred present in the castle, and the part<sup>1</sup> that devolved on him in this final drama made it necessary that he should remain at Yoshitsune's side to the last. When the fourteen issued from the courtyard, they found that the enemy's van was already within half a furlong of the portals. Had the ground been favourable for attack, such an overwhelming force as Yasuhira had sent must have borne down every obstacle and decided the contest forthwith. But the one road that led to the main gate was constructed along the crest of a bank falling away so rapidly

<sup>1</sup> It would be his duty to act as *Kaishaku*, or headsman, when Yoshitsune committed suicide.



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on either side that it afforded scant footing for men in armour. Thus fourteen warriors, especially such warriors as these, were for the moment at no serious disadvantage. Their first onset not only cleared the causeway but left them free to retire at leisure to the shelter of the building, where they found themselves still unscathed, while the ground without was strewn with fallen foes. This alternation of mutual advance and retreat was continued for some time. If the Minamoto men really achieved that day a tithe of the deeds for which tradition gives them credit, the praise posterity has accorded them is still too feeble. There came a time, however, when of the whole fourteen only two made good their retreat to the gate. These two were Benkei and Saburo. The latter was still comparatively unscathed, but the former, in addition to many minor hurts, had received a gash in the neck sufficient to have disabled an ordinary man. Leaving his comrade to guard the gate, the glaivesman hurried off to warn those within that the fatal moment had at last come. Yoshitsune, dressed entirely in white, was read-



## MONGOL INVASION

ing a *sutra* in a distinct voice, while in the adjoining chamber, of which the doors were thrown open, his girl-wife sat, her head bowed upon her bosom and her baby sleeping on her knees.

“Benkei paused involuntarily on the threshold. The power of speech and action seemed to have deserted him, and it was not till Yoshitsune’s quiet eyes had been fixed on his for some moments that he was able to falter: ‘They are all gone. Saburo and I alone are left. He guards the portal, and I have come to see your face once more.’

“‘Then, Benkei, if so many good men await us at the foot of the Happy Mountains, it were bad to stay here. Strike home then once more, old friend and trusty comrade, for the noise of the battle sounds nearer, and, if my ear deceive me not, Saburo is in evil case even now.’

“The glaivesman dropped upon his knees, and saluting his chief for the last time, turned back to succour his companion. At first his feet faltered strangely and he groped his way like a blind man, but beyond the threshold his strength returned to him with redoubled vigour,



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for at that very instant he saw Saburo beaten to the ground by a rain of blows. He leaped out into the thick of the *mêlée*, and dealing such strokes that those who survived them fell back in bewilderment, raised the body of his dying comrade and carried it within the gate.

“It is related that for a long time after this Benkei single-handed held the gate against the whole of the enemy’s force. He had broken the handle of his glaive short, so that he might use it more freely in his constrained position, and from above the pile of corpses that soon accumulated at his feet, the terrible weapon, whether by unerring foin or deadly sweep, bore down all that came within its range. His body was covered with wounds and a dozen arrows had pierced the points of his armour; but to the end none could discover any diminution of his strength, so that his assailants began to ask one another whether they were pitted against a man or a god. At last there came a lull in the combat. Barb and blade seemed powerless to overcome the giant, and his adversaries, ashamed of their discomfiture, were preparing a





A JAPANESE SCENE









A JAPANESE SAMURAI.







## MONGOL INVASION

new method of assault. Four men armed with iron balls and chains, to be thrown after the fashion of a lasso, advanced behind each other along the causeway. The first two were content to forfeit their lives in the attempt, but the others would scarcely fail to entangle the glaivesman's limbs and so hamper him that he might no longer resist. Benkei, meanwhile, appeared to take no notice whatever of this impending danger. Supported in part by the handle of his glaive, in part by the portal against which he leaned, he remained perfectly motionless, nor even changed his position when the leader of the four poised his weapon for a cast. Deftly thrown, the ball passed over his right shoulder, and whirling round and round, coiled its pendent chain tightly about his arm. Then suddenly he lurched forward and fell heavily to the ground. He had died where he stood, unconquered and unconquerable.

“The assailants now surged pell-mell into the building, from which smoke and flame were issuing in dense volumes. They found Yoshitsune lying dead, his hands laid upon the corpses of his



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wife and child. A little more, and the fire would have achieved its purpose, for the book he had been reading was half consumed, and it was with no little pains that they succeeded in carrying out his body."

Nevertheless the fact that Yoshitsune died at Koromo-gawa has long been doubted in Japan, and the doubt has grown stronger and assumed more definite shape in recent years. It was first authoritatively recorded in a history (*Dai-Nihon-shi*) compiled by distinguished scholars in the seventeenth century. These annalists pointed out that a head sent from Oshiu to Kamakura during the heat of summer, and not examined until it had been lying in *saké* for forty-three days, could not have been identified with any approach to assurance. That is undeniable. They further recorded a general belief that Yoshitsune escaped to Yezo, and they noted that the Ainu in that island revered his name and had built a shrine to his memory. That, too, is undeniable. There is also evidence, apparently credible, that from Yezo Yoshitsune ultimately crossed over to Tartary. Nothing, indeed, seems less likely



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than that such a man would have remained inactive in such a place as Yezu during the thirty or forty years of life naturally remaining to him when, in 1189, at thirty-one years of age, he fled from Oshiu. But between the mere facts that Yoshitsune did not die at Koromo-gawa, and that he subsequently made his way to Tartary, between these facts and the establishment of his identity with Genghis Khan, there is a long interval. What are the steps by which it is crossed? There is, first, the coincidence of time and age. If Yoshitsune found his way to the continent, it was in the closing years of the twelfth century, when he had attained the age of from thirty-one to forty. Precisely at that epoch and of the same age the figure of Genghis began to be prominent in the district near the sources of the Amur river. It is singular that Genghis, supposing him to have lived among the Tartars from his childhood, and supposing him to have been gifted with the extraordinary qualities that made him the conqueror of nearly the whole of Asia, should have passed the period of middle life without striking even one of the



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blows that afterwards rang from end to end of the Orient. Such tardiness of active ambition differentiates him from all the other great captains of the world. Then, in the second place, there is a similarity, almost an identity, of names. Here the fact must be recalled that the Tartars had no written script. For everything connected with their early annals we have to depend solely upon tradition, and there is no difficulty in detecting that fiction and romance had much to do with the tradition relating to the origin of Genghis. Had the names of his reputed father, of the man himself and of his chief generals been pure Mongol words, they would probably have escaped mutilation in the process of oral transmission from generation to generation, but if they were foreign, some mutilation would have been more than likely. The name of the great conqueror's father is said to have been "Yessugai," apparently a slightly corrupted form of "Yezokai," or the sea of Yezo. Genghis himself, before he assumed the name by which the world knows him, is said to have been called "Temujin."

A very probable hypothesis is that Yoshitsune





Figure 1. Mangrove forest, Kibira National Park, Uganda.



## JAPAN

Names that are words rang from end to end of the Orient with a tardiness of active ambition different from all the other great empires of the world. Then, in the second place, there is a similarity, almost an identity, of names. Here the fact must be recalled that the Tartars had no written script. For everything connected with their early annals we have to depend solely upon tradition, and there is no difficulty in admitting that fiction and romance had much to do with the tradition relating to the origin of Genghis. Had the names of his reputed father, of the man himself and of his chief generals been pure Mongol words, they would probably have escaped mutilation in the process of oral transmission from generation to generation, but if they were foreign, some mutilation would have been almost a certainty. The name of the great conqueror's father is said to have been "Yessugai," which is probably a slightly corrupted form of "Yezo," the sea of Yezo. Genghis himself, before he was called the name by which the world knows him, is said to have been called "Temujin."

The most probable hypothesis is that Yoshitsune





KIGA ROAD NEAR MIYANOSHITA.







## MONGOL INVASION

would have made his *début* on the continent under an assumed name. "Tenjin" is the name under which the celebrated Michizane was deified. Between the careers of Michizane and Yoshitsune there is a striking analogy. Both were distinguished by eminent talents and signal public services; both were traduced by rivals, and both were unjustly exiled. It is difficult to conceive any pseudonym which Yoshitsune would have been more likely to choose than "Tenjin." Another suggestion is that he called himself "Tengu-jin" in allusion to the popular fancy that his remarkable skill in fence had been derived from the teaching of the King of the *Tengu*. Then, the clan at the head of which "Temujin" made his first conquests was the "Nirongoun," and the meaning of the word is said to have been "children of the sun." The little band of men that followed Yoshitsune from Oshiu and received an accession of strength in Yezo before crossing to the continent, were "Nihon-jin" (Japanese), or men from the land of the rising sun. When "Temujin" began to acquire dominant military power, he called him-



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self "Genghis-khan;" or, to speak more correctly, he assumed a name which tradition calls "Genghis-khan." Yoshitsune was a scion of the Minamoto. His family name was "Gen," and the name of his clan, "Genji," or "Genke." "Gen" is, in fact, the alternative pronunciation of "Minamoto." Moreover, "Minamoto Yoshitsune" has for its alternative sound "Gen Gikei." Further, the word "Kian," or "Khan," is traditionally alleged to have meant "running water." "Gen," or "Minamoto," signifies "water source." A Chinese historian says that Genghis-khan was "Yuan Yi-king," and writes the name with the ideographs which, according to the ordinary Japanese rendering, would be read "Minamoto Yoshitsune." The wife of Genghis-khan had the title of "Fudjin." "Fujin" is the term applied to a married lady in Japan. Two of the principal generals of Genghis, sent by him to invade Persia and southern Europe, were called, according to tradition, "Subtai" and "Shuppi." The two principal followers of Yoshitsune were Saito Benkei and Washi-no-o Saburo. Between "Saito" and "Subtai" the resemblance is suffi-



## MONGOL INVASION

ciently evident, and "Shuppi" is the alternative sound of "Washi-no-o." Genghis is said to have given the name "Manchu" to the district over which he first acquired sway on the continent. "Manchu" is the alternative pronunciation of "Mitsunaka," Yoshitsune's princely ancestor.

These are certainly remarkable coincidences, difficult to ascribe to mere accident. If they have any value as establishing the identity of Genghis and Yoshitsune, then they also go to prove that the present Manchu rulers of China are of Japanese origin. Now, a passage transcribed by a Japanese author from a Chinese encyclopædia at the end of the eighteenth century attributes to the great Chinese Emperor Chien-lung (1786-1795) a statement which, read according to the Japanese sounds of the ideographs employed, is this: "My family name is *Gen*. I am a descendant of Yoshitsune, whose ancestor was Seiwa. Hence we call our dynasty *Sei*, and our family *Gen*." Yoshitsune was, in fact, a descendant of the Emperor Seiwa. The family to which he belonged was known in Japan as *Seiwa Genji*.



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In the legends connected with Genghis there are many points that seem to constitute connecting links between the story of the Japanese hero and that of the Asiatic conqueror; but we have already pursued the subject so far that this branch of it must be dismissed with reference to two identifications only. The first is that Genghis always fought under a white banner, and that the flag of the Minamoto was white, whereas their rivals and enemies, the Taira, carried a red pennant. The second is that the mother of Genghis is said to have been found by her future husband in the snow, and to have played a brave part in saving Genghis from political extinction in his early years; a tradition that bears a striking resemblance to Tokiwa's flight through the snow with Yoshitsune in her arms.

Annalists have concerned themselves little about these matters, yet for every student of Asiatic history they possess keen interest. Closer research may disclose clearer traces. Even in Japan the belief that Yoshitsune died at Koromogawa remained popular until after the Restora-







The first is the legend connected with the birth of Genghis Khan, which is said to have been handed down to constitute the national history of the Mongols. It is a story of the kind common in the legends of all nations, and the subject so far as it is connected with the birth of Genghis Khan has been discussed with reference to the legends of other nations. The first is the legend of the birth of Genghis Khan, which is said to have been handed down to constitute the national history of the Mongols. It is a story of the kind common in the legends of all nations, and the subject so far as it is connected with the birth of Genghis Khan has been discussed with reference to the legends of other nations. The first is the legend of the birth of Genghis Khan, which is said to have been handed down to constitute the national history of the Mongols. It is a story of the kind common in the legends of all nations, and the subject so far as it is connected with the birth of Genghis Khan has been discussed with reference to the legends of other nations.

Annalists have concerned themselves with these matters, yet for every story of the late History they possess keen interest. The story may disclose clearer traces. The belief that Yoshitsune died at Ise remained popular until after the





A WINTER SCENE IN YOKOHAMA.







## MONGOL INVASION

tion of 1867, when a call for documents relating to the titles of the various fiefs led to the discovery of a scroll among the Tsugaru archives, from which it appeared that Yoshitsune had found a temporary refuge in that extreme north-westerly district of the main island, and had subsequently escaped to Yezo. The scroll added that a follower of Yoshitsune, by name Hiro-sawa, who bore a close resemblance to his chief, sacrificed his life in order that his head might be sent to Kamakura for identification as that of Yoshitsune.

Yoritomo's conduct toward Yoshitsune has been execrated by historians. Judged by the standards of modern morality, it deserves execration. To Yoshitsune's exploits in the field Yoritomo owed much of his own ascendancy. He recompensed his brother's splendid services by sending a secret agent to assassinate him; he drove him, an exile, from Kyoto; he proscribed him throughout the length and breadth of the land, and he pursued him with implacable rancour even to his quiet retreat in the far north. It is a black record. But has it been read impar-



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tially? We may well inquire whether the romantic incidents of Yoshitsune's early career, the brilliancy of his martial achievements, and the sadness of his fate have not blinded posterity to some of the underlying facts of the story. Yoshitsune was not Yoritomo's real brother ; he was only his half brother. In the days when this tragedy of fraternal pitilessness occurred, ties of consanguinity snapped easily under the strain of ambition. The battle that preceded the death of Yoritomo's two brothers and his father, and involved the temporary ruin of his clan, had furnished a lurid illustration of the unnatural temper of the time.

That Yoshitsune should have conspired against Yoritomo would have revolted the conscience of the era as little as it had been revolted by twenty previous instances of family feuds. The brothers had been separated for twenty years when the elder raised his standard in Izu and struck his first blow against the Taira. They were virtually strangers. No personal reasons for mutual trust existed. Then arrived a day when Yoritomo, engaged in the comparatively unnoticed and inconspicuous task of organising the



## MONGOL INVASION

Kamakura administration, heard that Yoshitsune had become the centre of popular admiration in Kyoto; that his victories were the wonder of the nation, and that he stood high in favour at the Imperial Court. At the same time, Yoritomo learned from Kajiware, one of his most trusted captains, whom he had sent to superintend the operations of the campaign, that Yoshitsune was plotting against Kamakura. There was no difficulty in crediting the charge; it exactly fitted the situation. Historians are agreed that Kajiware's accusation rested on no basis of fact and had its origin in the personal jealousy of the accuser. They may be right, but Yoritomo thought differently, and so thinking, tried to compass Yoshitsune's death. The secret despatch of an assassin on such an errand was a foul act, according to modern canons. According to the canons of the twelfth century, it merited no opprobrium. Thereafter Yoshitsune stood forth as his brother's open enemy, and events moved in practically inevitable sequence. The epoch when the foundations of military feudalism were laid in Japan has been described by some writers



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as an era of chivalry, of doughty deeds and of self-sacrificing loyalty. Examples in support of that description can certainly be culled in abundance from the annals ; but so too can equally numerous evidences that the elementary passions of human nature had wide sway.





A JAPANESE CEMETERY.



## JAPAN

Japan is famous for her mighty deeds and of her warriors, who have found examples in support of their duty. The Japanese are to be culled in abundance for their devotion to duty, so too can equally be culled for their devotion to elementary passions and desires. . . .





A JAPANESE CEMETERY.







## IX

### YOSHITSUNE, GENGHIS AND THE MONGOL INVASION

*(Concluded)*



BEFORE THE CONQUESTS OF Genghis began to attract attention beyond the limits of the remote region where they commenced, Yoritomo had been laid in his grave on the summit of a hill overlooking the city that his power had created. He had given to his country ten years of peace and good government, blessings rare at that epoch; he had earned the gratitude of the farmer and the artisan by liberal patronage; he had substituted the verdicts of duly constituted tribunals for the arbitrary dicta of territorial magnates; and he had left behind him the reputation of a brave and energetic man, just and clear-sighted in all his dealings. He died in 1199, and sixty-nine years later there arrived at



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Dazaifu, the seat of local government in Kyūshū, an envoy from Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis. Kublai had by that time established himself at Cambaluc (Pekin), and commenced the celebrated siege of Shianyang, soon to be followed by the great campaign down the Yangtze and the fall of Nanking. It is a singular fact that at one period of his career Kublai, suspected of disloyalty, was deprived of his command by his elder brother, and at another had to take the field against his younger, thus repeating in his own person the combined experiences of Yoshitsune and Yoritomo. If Genghis may be identified with Yoshitsune, it would seem that the blood of the Minamoto had a hereditary taint of treachery, for while the house of the Manchu conqueror was divided against itself in China the maternal relatives of Yoritomo in Japan were conspiring to oust his descendants from the place of pre-eminence he had bequeathed to them. Kublai's despatch of an envoy to Japan seems to have been dictated by pure ambition. It has been suggested that piratical raids made from Tsushima against the



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Koreans, whom he now numbered among his subjects, impelled him to take steps for bringing Japan within the pale of his authority. But that theory is difficult to reconcile with the fact that the Koreans themselves were the means of dissuading the first Mongol ambassadors (1266) from continuing their journey to Kyūshū. The most reasonable conclusion is that Kublai resented the independent attitude maintained since the ninth century by an insignificant little island empire lying almost within sight of his own dominions. His message was unceremonious. Couched in language more peremptory than polite, it asked Japan to open relations with the great Mongol Court on terms closely resembling those of vassalage. The Japanese resolved to send no reply. Again and again Kublai repeated his message; again and again he failed to elicit any response. Yet, if what he asked was difficult for Japan to grant, he certainly did not proceed to enforce his demand until it had become unmistakable that in order to include the Japanese among his tributaries he must first conquer them. The Japanese, on



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their side, did not misapprehend the result that the irresolution must involve. They understood the might of the power they were defying, and they proceeded to set their house in order.

We have aids other than mere written annals to expound this memorable incident in Japan's career. Simultaneously with the inauguration of the military, or Kamakura, epoch there grew up a style of painting known as the *Tosariu*. Its artists took for subjects the martial scenes that came under their daily observation. From the point of view of high art not much can be said for their achievements, but the practical fidelity of their work is unquestionable. At the time of which we write two of the leaders of the new school were Tosa-no Nagataka and Kono Nagaakira. To these men the task of depicting the incidents of the Mongol invasion was intrusted by Suyenaga, a *Samurai*, who, in company with three members of the Taneyasu family, had rendered notable service against the invaders. Nagataka and Nagaakira painted two scrolls, each a dozen yards long, with marginal references to the subjects of the pictures. The



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scrolls exist to-day. They tell us much about the ways and weapons of warfare six hundred years ago.

The time (1268) of the arrival of Kublai's first envoy was separated by six years from the time (1274) when his forces appeared off the shores of Japan. The Japanese devoted that interval to preparation. They could foresee pretty accurately at what point the storm would burst, and they fortified the whole of the vulnerable parts of the northern coast of Kyūshū according to the engineering lights of those days. It was a simple process. All along the shore the heights were crowned with a low parapet of loose stones, and at places where the configuration of the ground did not afford the necessary elevation, embankments were raised to support the parapet. The latter varied in height from two feet to six, so as to afford complete shelter while, at the same time, allowing bowmen to use their weapons freely. The trace showed no idea of flank defence; shelter seemed to have been the sole object. For weapons the defenders had swords, glaives and bows, the last of two kinds, namely,



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an ordinary bow from five to seven and a half feet long and a cross-bow. Tradition says that the cross-bow came originally from Korea in the year 617 A. D. It was a powerful weapon, generally drawn by two men specially selected on account of their thews; but sometimes the united force of ten or fifteen men was required, and there is a record of one particularly strong cross-bow for the service of which no less than a hundred soldiers were told off. It does not appear that any remarkable accuracy was achieved with this weapon. The *Samurai* preferred the common bow, in the use of which he often showed great skill. Nevertheless bands of cross-bowmen were stationed at all the important points along the coast.

Kublai evidently under-estimated the resistance that his troops were likely to encounter in Japan, a fact difficult to reconcile with the hypothesis that his grandfather was Yoshitsune. The first messenger sent from the south to inform the Court in Kyoto of the coming of the Mongol army of invasion, spoke vaguely of "several thousands of warships," and his report found its



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way into annals in which some historians place credit. But estimates evidently more accurate put the number of vessels at from 300 to 400, from which it may be inferred that the fighting force aggregated from thirty to forty thousand men, a small army to despatch on such an errand. The ships had been built in Korea by order of Kublai, and a considerable contingent of Koreans joined the expedition. On the 12th of November in the year 1274 they appeared off the island of Tsushima. Neither there nor at Iki, an island lying still nearer the shores of Japan, did they encounter any serious resistance, and on the 25th of the same month they reached Imazu, in Chikuzen, a littoral province on the north of Kyūshū. Two days previously intelligence of the invasion had been received in Kyoto, but no resource then remained except to trust to the local troops and make due supplication to heaven, which last function was discharged with the utmost zeal and munificence, to the considerable enrichment of the shrines and the discontent of people who did not fully share the Imperial Court's confidence in supernatural agencies. As



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to what happened at the scene of the invasion in Kyūshū, while litanies were chanted and incense burned at the great fanes in and around Kyoto, we have an account compiled in the year 1289 by Sadahide, chief official at the shrine of Hakozaiki, where the Japanese forces had their headquarters. Sadahide called his composition "Gudoki," that is to say, a poor or vulgar record, because, being intended for the perusal of the multitude, it was written with the Japanese syllabary, the script of the illiterate, instead of being transcribed in perplexing ideographs which would have rendered it unintelligible to the great mass of military men in an age when the pursuit of martial exercises ranked incomparably higher than the study of literature.

For the sake of the interest attaching to the style of such a history, composed on the very battlefield by one who had witnessed the events of which he wrote, and for the sake also of Sadahide's facts, which, after all, represent the sum of our written information, we translate the passages of the *Gudoki* that directly concern the invasion: "On the 19th day of the tenth





METHOD OF DRESSING THE HAIR (FOR MEN)  
BEFORE THE REVOLUTION OF 1897.



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METHOD OF DRESSING THE HAIR (FOR MEN)  
BEFORE THE REVOLUTION OF 1867.







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month of the eleventh year of *Bunyei* (25th November, 1274) the *Moko* fleet reached Imazu, in Chikuzen, and advanced, land forces and sea forces. On the 20th the van effected a landing, and, mounting horses, marched to the onset with colours flying. Suketoki, a lad of twelve or thirteen, grandson of General Kakuye, fired a *kokabura* " (a species of toy arrow that hummed as it passed through the air) "by way he said of crossing arrows with the enemy; whereat the *Moko* men raised a chorus of laughter and, beating drums, sounding gongs and shouting, came on with a stupendous din. The arrows that they shot were short; but the tips being poisoned, a wound received from them was deadly. Hundreds of archers were marshalled in front of the foe, shooting volleys of arrows that fell as thick as rain. If any man drew near to attack them, they opened their ranks, enclosed him and slew him, and when a man fell they slashed him open, tore out his liver and ate it. A nation that habitually takes delight in eating the flesh of oxen and horses, they did not confine themselves to men's livers, but



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made a meal of the horses also that they shot. Their armour was light, their horsemanship good, their muscle excellent, and they seemed to set no value on their lives. Their commanding officer directed operations from an eminence. Drums gave the signal for advance, and drums also gave the signal for retiring. When in retreat they fired iron balls containing fire, from machines to which the name of *teppo* " (thereafter used to designate guns) " was given. The discharge of these was accompanied by a great din, and when they burst on striking, fire flew in all directions and the air was blackened with smoke. Many of our folk perished on account of these weapons. The Japanese soldiers had expected to fight according to their custom ; that is to say, one man at a time advancing, declaring his name and engaging in single combat with one of the other side. But the invaders' method was to work in combination, bearing down an assailant by force of numbers and killing him or taking him prisoner. After a time no Japanese was found willing to brave such tactics. Matura's men, who displayed conspicuous courage, were nearly all struck down.



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“It was at this time that Yamada, a soldier who had saved his life by running and who was chagrined to have done so, drew a bow and killed two of the enemy; whereat the Japanese raised a chorus of laughter, but the *Moko* men retreated beyond range without a sound. Nevertheless, they grew steadily stronger, and pushed on as far as Akasaka, taking thousands of prisoners. Kikuchi Jiro, at the head of about a hundred horsemen, charged them desperately, with the result that the whole of his following were slain, he himself alone returning alive from among the corpses. None any longer offered to fight the invaders. At this juncture, there was observed among the *Moko* a huge man, some seven feet high, who appeared to be their general. His beard reached to his waist; he wore red armour and rode a chestnut horse. The Japanese commander, Kagesuke, took note of this prominent figure, and summoning one of his soldiers noted for skill in archery, bade him shoot at the big stranger. The arrow flew true to its mark, and the great man tumbled prone. Another of the enemy's men, who also



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rode a chestnut horse and had a saddle with gold trappings, was captured about the same time by our people, and from him it was learned that the tall man commanded the *Moko* and that his name was Liu. The Japanese now advanced in full strength, and the enemy, abandoning Hakozaki, retired *pêle-mêle*, by the light of numerous conflagrations. That night a great storm swept down, and the main part of the enemy's fleet suffered shipwreck, more than 18,500 of them losing their lives. The rest fled."

The picture that the above account presents of Japanese fighting tactics in the thirteenth century is very instructive. Evidently no attempt was made to oppose the landing of the invaders; the moment of supreme danger for an army carried over sea to the attack of a foreign country was suffered to pass wholly unutilised. Such negligence will, at first sight, seem attributable to the fact that the Japanese were entirely without experience in repelling onsets from abroad. But though they had never suffered invasion, they had often played the part of invaders; and if, in their various raids against



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Korea, they had been taught anything about the perils of landing in the face of a hostile force they would certainly have turned the lesson to advantage on the occasion of the coming of the Mongols. The inevitable inference is that naval warfare was practically unknown in Japan and Korea at the time of which we write, and that the fundamental principles of coast defence had not yet been recognised. We see, too, that strategy and tactics had not emerged from an infant state. A field of battle resembled a monster fencing match. Men fought as individuals, not as units of a tactical formation, and the engagement consisted of a number of personal duels, all in simultaneous progress. In that respect the Mongols were greatly superior; they knew how to combine their strength. There is an English tradition about a certain Scotchman who, totally innocent of the etiquette of the fencing salon, clove the skull of a polished French challenger before the latter had concluded the elaborate salute that should have preceded the real business of fighting. The Japanese had a similar experience at Imazu.



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It must have been a grim surprise for the polite *Samurai* when, in answer to his punctilious proclamation of his names and titles, a mass of unscrupulous Mongols set upon him and hacked him down, instead of the single adversary for whose leisurely and dignified advance he had prepared himself. But for the storm that wrought such havoc on that winter night, the island of Kyūshū might have been conquered by the Mongols, as Tsushima and Iki had already been conquered.

Kublai was not deterred by this reverse. The force he had directed against Kyūshū constituted but a small fraction of his military potentialities. He had now an immense number of troops at his disposal, owing to the conclusion of his campaign against the Sung dynasty, and he prepared to beat Japan to her knees. His renewal of warlike operations was prefaced, however, by fresh attempts to open friendly relations with the island empire. Six months after the shattered remnants of his fleet had escaped from Imazu he sent another envoy with instructions to insist upon a reception at Kyoto or Kama-



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kura, instead of remaining in Kyūshū and forwarding the documents he carried, as his predecessors had been obliged to do. The envoy's demand was conceded. He reached Kamakura, had audience of Tokimune, and was then led out to the seashore and decapitated. Among the "lions" of modern Kamakura is the place where To Se-chung's head rolled on the sand. Still Kublai did not proceed to extremities. He waited four years, and then (1279) once more sent two new envoys, Cheu and Lwan. They were beheaded without even the preliminary satisfaction of travelling to Kyoto or Kamakura. The patient magnanimity displayed by Kublai in this matter was so inconsistent with the usages of his era that a special motive suggests itself. Was Japan something more to him than a mere outlying and defiant section of eastern Asia, where vast tracts of territory and powerful peoples had already come under his sceptre? It is true that Kublai was a man of admirable clemency when the quality could be safely exercised. His treatment of his younger brother, who disputed his succession, may be cited as



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an example of wise mercy, rare in the records of victorious races just emerging from a condition of semi-barbarism. But his conduct toward Japan seems to defy measurement by any ordinary standard of forbearance. His fruitless efforts to establish amicable relations extended over a period of seven years. During that interval he sent envoy after envoy to the island empire. History records the arrival of six embassies, and speaks vaguely of several others. Never once did the Japanese vouchsafe an answer, and finally they accentuated their insulting silence by beheading the envoys. Yet for four years longer Kublai quietly put aside not only the memory of his first defeat, an affair too insignificant to deter fresh effort, but also the spectacle of his slaughtered ambassador, and at the end of those four years he sent another embassy to experience similarly ferocious treatment in Japan. His conduct was certainly suggestive. As for the Japanese, the nature of the intercourse proposed by Kublai explains their rejection of it. They were asked to become tributaries of the Mongol empire, and they



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declined. If their method of signifying refusal became savage at the end, it was doubtless because they had failed to find any other method conclusive. After all, when a stranger persists in conveying unwelcome proposals and, despite the return of his unanswered missives, continues to send replicas by fresh delegates, the prompting of first principles is to make the messenger suffer for the master's importunity.

On June 10, 1281, the advance squadron of the second Mongol expedition made its appearance off Tsushima. It consisted of Korean vessels only. For more than a year Kublai had been collecting troops and transports in the harbours of Kiangsu, Fuhkien and Chekiang. When his forces finally embarked they numbered, according to Chinese and Japanese annals, over a hundred thousand men; a mixed body consisting of Chinese and Mongols in the proportion of about three to one. These were to combine with a Korean contingent at the point of attack. The distance was traversed chiefly by rowing; sails do not seem to have been used except as auxiliaries. Large-decked boats, with very high



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prows and a clumsy capstan perched at the stern, were propelled by means of oars passed through holes in the sides. These craft had no apparatus for naval warfare except that the rowers were protected by bulwarks of timber and matting, and at the prow there was an arrangement of shields over which arrows could be shot. They carried some kind of artillery, but of its exact nature we have no details. An ancient Japanese record (*Kamakura-kudai-ki*), generally counted trustworthy, says that iron balls, twenty or thirty at a time, were discharged from the Chinese vessels, with a thunder-like detonation, and that they inflicted heavy loss upon the Japanese, striking down numbers of men, breaching the parapets and setting fire to the watch-towers. The invaders had thickly padded coats with ample skirts falling below the knee, and iron helmets from which depended curtains padded like their coats, hanging over the shoulders and fastened round the chin in front. The helmets of some of the officers were fine specimens of the armourer's craft, being forged of thin, tough metal richly inlaid with silver or gold. For weapons



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they carried bows, spears with broad triangular points, useful for thrusting purposes only, and straight swords fastened to the girdle by two short slings. Such a costume must have greatly impeded freedom of motion, not to speak of its intolerable heat.

Artillery apart, the Japanese were more intelligently and effectively equipped for defensive and offensive purposes. Their armour, though heavy, did not form one piece. The brassards and skirts were suspended loosely from the shoulders and waist, and even the hauberk was not solid, the general system being a flexible combination of metal plates and links. On horseback the *bushi's* feet were partly protected by heavy metal stirrups shaped like a high-low boot with the sides pared away. The bows, from  $5\frac{1}{2}$  to 7 feet long, were of great strength, and nearly every warrior, whether mounted or on foot, carried one,—skill in archery being the *Samurai's* proudest achievement next to dexterous swordsmanship. Of the Japanese sword it is scarcely necessary to speak. Already at the time of which we write it had become the splen-



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didly keen, deadly weapon now famed throughout the world, and its superiority to the light, poorly tempered Chinese blade was as marked as the superiority of a modern rifle to a mediæval arquebus. Something similar may be said of the glaive. It has been common to speak of Japanese spearmen, but, in truth, the spear as a thrusting weapon never found much favour in Japan. A long glaive with crescent-shaped blade, the convex edge sharpened to the keenness of a razor, was the *bushi's* arm, and its manipulation for slashing rather than stabbing purposes had developed into a fine art. But the very excellence of his weapons and the value that they derived from the strength and expertness of their wielder spoiled the battle tactics of the *Samurai* in mediæval days. Individual skill ranked far above massed movements, and the science of combination seemed of less importance than the vindication of personal prowess.

For maritime warfare the Japanese were conspicuously ill-equipped. Their boats were puny affairs compared with those of the Chinese. No protection of any kind was provided for the



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rowers; they worked in a group at the stern, and in retreat must have been exposed to the full brunt of the enemy's missiles. It is plain that, up to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, no idea of naval fighting existed in Japan. If boats were used, they served merely for transport purposes, whether the aim was a raid upon an enemy's coast or the boarding of his vessel.

It may easily be supposed that when the Japanese government resorted to the decapitation of Kublai's envoys by way of response to his overtures, it spared no efforts to meet the onset which such a challenge must provoke. Large bodies of troops were massed in the north of Kyūshū, and distinguished members of the Hojo clan proceeded thither to direct the defences. The Korean contingent of the invaders having arrived first at the rendezvous, had to await the coming of the Chinese fleet, and in the interval they undertook a wholesale massacre of the inhabitants of Tsushima and Iki. Neither sex nor age constituted a title to mercy. Japanese history notes with grim brevity that the women and children of Iki fled to the mountains, but



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were tracked to their hiding places by the sound of the babies' crying. We translate again from the *Hachiman Gudoki*: "Five hundred Korean boats, forming the van, arrived at Iki on June 10. Matsura's troops engaged them, and there were many killed and wounded on both sides. The invaders' fleet pushed forward to Munakata in Chikuzen, and on the 25th of June the Yuan armada appeared off the islands of Shiga and Noko in Chikuzen, where it was joined by the Korean squadron. Meanwhile the Kyūshū troops assembled, and the archers formed up to repel the invasion, but owing to scarcity of provisions many of them lacked strength to draw a bow. The first to attack the enemy were the Oyano brothers, Taro and Saburo. Embarking in two boats, they boarded the enemy's vessels, set them on fire and came back with twenty-one heads. Five or six of the *Moko* vessels and many of their crews perished in the flames. Thereafter they moored their ships together and kept strict guard, the whole being protected by catapults rigged in the larger vessels, from which heavy stones were discharged to the speedy destruction



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of the small boats used by the Japanese soldiers. Night attacks had ultimately to be abandoned, and a general engagement awaited.

“It was then that Kono Rokuro, a *Samurai* of Iyo province, headed a boat for the centre of the *Moko* fleet. The enemy, who were prepared for the assault, discharged a flight of arrows and stones, killing four or five of their assailants. Kono’s uncle, the lord of Hoki, was struck by a stone from a catapult on the left side of the neck and incapacitated for using a bow. Wielding his sword with one hand, he cut down a mast, and using it as a bridge, leaped on board the *Moko* vessel and slashed right and left. The party carried back a number of heads, and also a big man who seemed to be high in command and who wore a jewel on his helmet.

“The *Kurando*, Otomo, also led a band of thirty men against the fleet, and destroyed several vessels, killing a number of the invaders. After that, most of those who engaged in night attacks lost their lives, but the *Moko*, much discomfited, drew off, and changed the scene of

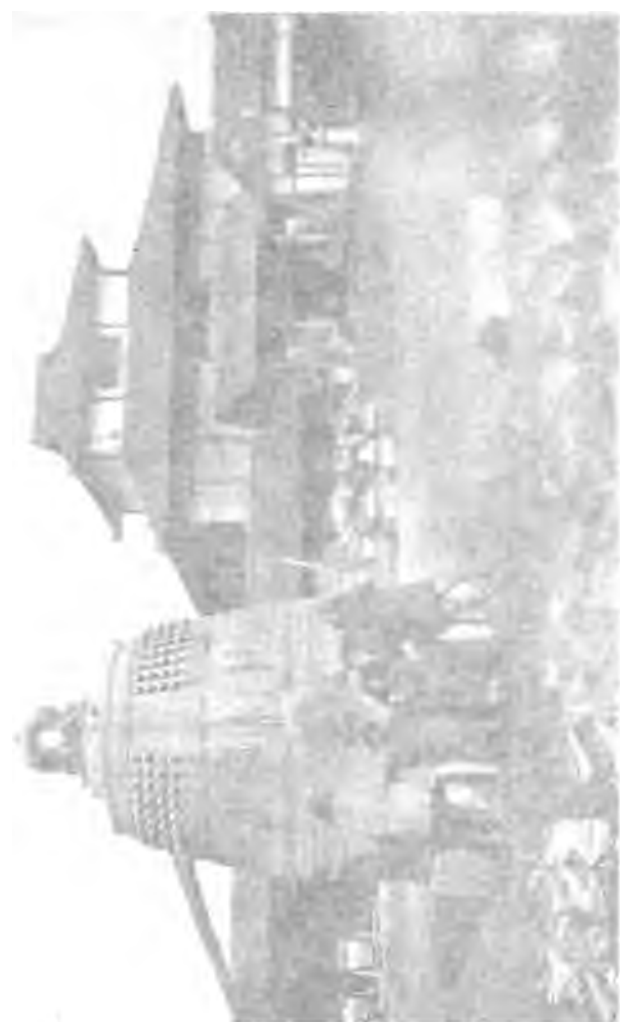


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operations to Takashima in Hizen.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese now projected an assault on a large scale, and their forces began to converge for the purpose. But scarcity of provisions and the absence of any general authorised to assume command in chief of the mixed army impeded their operations. At that supreme moment prayers were offered to the tutelary divinity of Hakozaki, who had vouchsafed aid on the occasion of the previous invasion, and while worship was going on a messenger arriving from the island of Shiga reported that during the night of August 21 a violent northerly gale had sprung up, so that on the 22d the enemy's fleet was completely shattered. Before the storm burst, a green dragon had raised its head from the waves. Simultaneously with its appearance, sulphurous flames filled the firmament, and flying from the awful apparition, the vessel of the *Moko* commander-in-chief was dashed ashore at Ura-no-fuki in Nagato. The ships of his followers fared no better. The

<sup>1</sup> A radical change, for whereas they had been hitherto attempting to land on the northern coast of Kyūshū, they now transferred their attack to the western coast. The Takashima here mentioned is not to be confounded, however, with the island of the same name near Nagasaki, famous for its coal mines.







Hezen. The Jagan-  
 built on a large rock,  
 converge for the pur-  
 sons and the absence  
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 of Hakozaiki, who  
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 coast. The Takashima here mentioned is not to  
 with the island of the same name near Nagato  
 mines.





BIG BRONZE BELL AT KYOTO.







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coast was piled high with corpses. Some thousands of the enemy, who had effected a landing on Takashima, repaired eighteen of their ships and attempted to escape over sea, but the troops of the western division under the command of Saburozayemon, embarking in over a hundred boats, cut them to pieces. Their heads were first gibbeted, and afterwards thrown to the fishes for food. The fealty of the men who wrought these deeds is hereby recorded, but the spectacle of that wholesale slaughter is indescribable. Yet, in order that the gracious tutelage of the deities of the divine country might be made known to the over-sea folk, three men were saved alive and sent home in a small boat. With regard to the great storm, it was raised by the united efforts of the deities of Usa-Hachiman-gu, Ise-Daijin-gu and Osaka Sumiyoshi-Jingu. There is none who does not worship the might and majesty of the gods."

This curious mixture of superstition and bravery constitutes an eloquent commentary on the morals and manners of the epoch. At first the writer of the record finds nothing to set



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down save the valorous deeds of common mortals. With unconscious veracity he leaves wholly out of the account the deities, their storms, their green dragons and their sulphurous fumes, and describes the plain course of military events up to the temporary withdrawal of the baffled Mongol fleet. But it then becomes expedient for him to drag in the gods, and he therefore manufactures a necessity for their interference by drawing a picture of a leaderless and provisionless army and a situation hopeless without help from heaven. To understand the motives of this ancient annalist, we must turn our eyes for a moment to Kyoto. Thither, while the Oyano brothers, Kono, his stout uncle, and other *Samurai* were dashing at the big fleet and rendering it powerless for offensive purposes, a messenger arrived post haste carrying a false announcement that the Mongols had borne down all resistance and were advancing toward the capital. The Emperor did not think of flying. He prayed. Attended by the principal court nobles, he went in person to worship at the shrine of the god of battles, sent an auto-



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graphic supplication to be laid before the great fane in Ise, and solemnly vowed to sacrifice his life for the honour of his country. Never for one instant, by night or by day, did the burning of incense and the chanting of litanies cease at the chief temples and shrines throughout the empire. Immense sums were lavished on account of these services,—sums said to have been greater than those spent upon the war itself,—and after the Mongol fleet had been shattered and the invaders destroyed, it was not upon the brave men who saved the country that rewards were showered, but upon the Buddhist priests and *Shinto* officials, to the great discontent of the military nobles who imagined that the money might have been better employed in buying food for the nation's defenders and defraying the costs of the campaign. It is easy to see, by the light of these facts, why a tonsured scribe, writing within eight years of the events he recorded, found it expedient to give to the tutelary deities a prominent place in the last scene of the drama.

The story told by the *Gudoki* shows that the



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tactics of the Japanese underwent a complete change in the interval between the two Mongol invasions. On the first occasion no attempt was made to oppose the landing of the enemy, and in the engagements that ensued the Japanese frittered away their strength by pursuing the disjointed methods of fighting peculiar to their own military canons. On the second occasion the Mongols, despite their artillery, their catapults and their great host, never succeeded in setting foot upon shore. Held at bay by a series of continuous and desperate attacks, insignificant as displays of national force, but of deadly efficacy and most harassing character, the huge fleet found nothing better than to lie huddled together, the big ships protecting the little, and the whole incapable of offensive action. It is the first and only historical instance of victory's resting with sword, spear and bow against gunpowder and bullet. Moreover, it illustrates two important phases of Japanese character—versatility and devoted courage. With the intuition of born soldiers the *Samurai* saw that they must modify their methods, and not only abandon the old



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etiquette of the battle, but also play the part of assailants at whatever risk. Boat combats were not unfamiliar to them.

The great struggle at Dan-no-ura which decided the fate of the Taira clan had been fought chiefly on the water. No tricks of manœuvre came into play. The simple plan was to lay boat alongside boat, and commit the rest to sword and glaive. Such a programme was eminently effective against the comparatively inexperienced and clumsily equipped Mongols and Chinese. From the moment that a skilled Japanese swordsman or glaivesman gained a footing in a ship crowded with soldiers of the kind that fought for Kublai, swift carnage followed inevitably. Yet certainly the highest order of valour presided at those onsets where one or two little boats, their occupants armed with bow, glaive and sword only, rowed out to attack a fleet of fifteen hundred vessels provided with culverins and catapults. The Tosa scrolls show us some of these boats dashing seaward on their reckless errand, and append the names of the *musha* seated in them, as well as the issue of each



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venture. In no case can more than ten fighting men be counted in one boat. Their wooden shields, when they carry such defences, hang over the gunwale; at the bow kneels the banner-bearer raising aloft a long white pennant, and in the stern half a dozen men, sometimes wearing hauberts, but generally without any protection whatever, bare-armed and bare-shouldered, strain desperately at the sculls. It must have been to their insignificant dimensions and the rapidity of their movements that these boats owed their frequent immunity from the balls of iron and stone discharged by the Chinese fleet. Men who had hearts stout enough for such ventures deserve the praise that posterity accords them as the saviours of their country's independence.



## X

### CREEDS AND CASTES



HAVING CARRIED OUR READ-  
ers sufficiently far into the realm  
of Japanese history to give them  
a general idea of the sequence of  
national events; of the gradual transfer of ad-  
ministrative power from the sovereign to the  
subject; of the rise of territorial magnates in  
mediæval times and their assertion of local  
autonomy; of the fiction that invested the throne  
with sanctity while subserving its influence to  
the ambitious purposes of its alleged defenders;  
of the centuries of sanguinary struggles that ac-  
companied the development of military feudalism;  
of the fighting qualities and fine devotion of the  
Japanese soldier; of the overflow of his warlike  
impulses into neighbouring countries, and of the  
great gulf that separated the wielder of the  
sword from the holder of the *soroban* (abacus),



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we turn to problems connected with the structure of society, the primitive creed of the nation and the manners and customs of the people. On the threshold of our retrospect we find lines of caste cleavage extending far back into the fabulous ages until they reach the Goddess of the Sun and the "August Progenitor and Progenitrix."

Japanese mythology has been treated by many writers with supercilious indifference. The growth of worlds in space, the separation of seas and lands by word of command, the creation of light and the genesis of all things, as recounted by Moses, make no smaller demand upon human credulity than do the cosmographical legends of primeval Japan. Yet to the former we devote centuries of thought and cycles of discussion, while we dismiss the latter with a note of exclamation. To Japanese mythology we must go, however, in search of materials to interpret a creed that has become instinctive among her people, and customs that have survived the onset of foreign fashions and alien philosophies.

The sequence of ideas that presided at the elaboration of the Japanese cosmogony is at once





STONE TORII, SUWA TEMPLE, NAGASAKI.



## T A A A

the people are connected with the past, the  
 country is the heritage of the nation and  
 the life of the citizens of the people. On the  
 other hand, the past we find lines of caste  
 and class, and of course into the fabulous  
 world of the Golden Goddess of the Sun  
 and the Golden Goddess of the Sun and Progenitor."

the world has been treated by many nations with a cold indifference. The separation of sexes is the order of the day, the separation of sexes is the order of the day, the creation of a new order of things, as recounted in the Bible, is a demand upon human nature, the geographical legends of old Japan. Not to the former we devote our thoughts and cycles of discussion, but to the latter with a note of ex-

To Japanese methodology we must go, to search of materials to interpret a culture whose customs have become instinctive among her people, customs that have survived the onset of modern and alien philosophies.

the Japanese cosmogony is at once





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logical and illogical. Sometimes it shocks the most lenient intelligence ; sometimes it surprises the most sceptical predisposition. In the beginning of all sentient things we have two supreme beings, Izanagi and Izanami, themselves the outcome of a series of semi-mystical, semi-realistic processes of evolution. By them the task of creation is undertaken. Matter already exists. With its origin the Japanese cosmographist did not attempt to deal. *Ex nihilo nihil fit* seemed to him an undeniable proposition, as it seemed to Moses also. But it was matter almost completely lacking consistency ; unsubstantial, nebulous, indescribable. Drops of this filmy thing falling from the point of Izanagi's spear crystallised into the first land, rising small and solitary from the "blue waste of sea." By that time the evolution of the creator and creatrix had attained such a stage that they were capable of procreation. They begot the islands of Japan, as well as a number of lesser divinities fashioned after their own image. It is to be observed that the Japanese cosmographist did not rise to the idea of immaculate conception. He found the



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process of procreation sufficiently inscrutable, sufficiently miraculous, even as he knew it, to be worthy the great originators of all things, and he saw no occasion to explain a miracle by a miracle. To the islands thus begotten a number of the new deities descended. These were the terrestrial divinities. At the outset the condition of the land born in the waste of waters was almost as that of the earth in the language of the Pentateuch—without form, and void, darkness brooding over the face of the deep. Then the god of fire is brought forth, his celestial mother expiring in travail. The creator follows her to the under-world, but fails to recover her, and, on his return, purifies himself by washing in the waves, during which process many new deities are evolved; chief among them the Goddess of the Sun (*Amaterasu*), but among them also a legion of evil spirits of pollution destined to afflict human beings through all ages. The eating of the forbidden fruit bequeathed to the Christian world its legacy of suffering and its awful doctrine of original sin. The violation of a law higher than his own mandates condemned



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Izanagi to become the father of his children's enemies.

It will be observed that the conception of cleanliness and the birth of light are synchronised in the Japanese system. Thereafter ensues an epoch during which the spirits of evil gain sway in the newly created world, confusion and tumult increase, until at last the creator delegates to the Sun Goddess the task of restoring peace and order. She despatches her nephew, Ninigi, to do the great god's bidding, and by him the terrestrial divinities are induced to surrender the sceptre, though they continue during centuries to struggle for power until Jimmu, the first mortal descendant of Ninigi, completes their subjugation.

In this cosmogony the birth of fire precedes that of light, but both constitute a part of the celestial transformation by which the earth passed from chaos to cosmos. Other pens, tracing the same story under other skies, might have constructed the version still reverentially taught in the nurseries and churches of the Occident—a world of indescribable matter, formless, void and dark; the creation of land and



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its separation from water; a sun called into existence to lighten and vivify; a long struggle, divided into six epochs by the inspired writers of the Old Testament, but of indefinite length in the Japanese cosmogony; finally, the appearance of man upon the scene and his acquisition of dominion.

It has been said that whosoever the earliest invaders of the far-Eastern islands were, there is no more reason to suppose that they came to Japan without a religion than that they arrived there without a language. It has been also said by a learned sinologue that Amaterasu is identical with the Persian Mithras. A slightly increased strain upon the imaginative faculty might extend the line of Jimmu's ancestors to the city of Ur and the thirty-million-bricked temple of the Sun God; for if we once concede that the Japanese cosmogony is not indigenous but exotic, and if we begin to trace analogies between its outlines and those of some continental "revelation," or likenesses between the nomenclatures of the two, we shall soon arrive at startling results. Such speculations do not



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concern us here. Our business is to show what the Japanese believed, and how their beliefs influenced their lives.

Touching briefly upon these topics in a previous chapter, we pointed out the possibility of translating the semi-mythical traditions of old Japan into a vulgar record of aggressive invasions and defensive struggles, conflicts between the lust of conquest and the love of altar and hearth. Interesting as such interpretations prove to the historian, they must not be allowed to exclude other considerations; for whatever secular facts may be embodied in these ancient cosmographies, they enshrine also the germs of Japan's primitive religion, *Shinto*, or "the Way of the Gods," as it came to be called when the presence of other creeds made a distinctive appellation necessary. Before we pass to a brief examination of the creed let us turn for a moment to consider how its supernatural elements presented themselves to the national mind.

A common theory among foreign observers is that destructive criticism has never been permitted to invade the cosmogonical realm in



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Japan ; that the basis of the national polity being the divine origin of the Emperor, any doubts thrown upon the traditions by which that genealogy is established would be counted treasonable. There is a large measure of truth in the supposition, but it is not the whole truth. If we except the persecutions of Christianity, which were altogether political, men did not suffer any penalty for their opinions in Japan. The celebrated scholar Arai Hakuseki published a work of strongly rationalistic tendencies in the beginning of the eighteenth century; and some sixty years later Ichikawa Tatsumaro wrote a brochure containing many of the criticisms that have been given to the world with such telling effect by modern sinologues.<sup>1</sup> It would not have

<sup>1</sup> Ichikawa's view has been ably summarised by Sir Ernest Satow. He sets out by declaring that all unwritten traditions must be considered unworthy of belief, not only because they rest on the very fallible testimony of memory and hearsay, but also because the most striking, and therefore the most improbable, stories are precisely those most likely to be thus preserved. He then goes on to show that on the most favourable hypothesis the art of writing did not become known in Japan until a thousand years had separated the reign of the first mortal ruler from the compilation of the first manuscript record. He conjectures that "Amaterasu" was a title of comparatively modern invention. He contends that no cosmogony can be credible which makes vegetation antecedent to the birth of the sun. He declares unhesitatingly that the claim of sun genesis was probably invented by the earliest Mikados for political purposes. He denies that the gods



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been possible for any critic to attack more ruthlessly the principle of the Mikado's divine descent than Ichikawa attacked it. Yet he went unscathed; nay more, he and Arai received the high appreciation justly accorded to those who, through a sense of duty, oppose the strong current of popular opinion. With regard, on the other hand, to the faith of the believers in the bases of *Shinto*, it may be summed up in the words attributed by Byron to Athena's wisest son, "All that we know is, nothing can be known." "It is impossible for man with his limited intelligence," writes Motoori Norinaga,<sup>1</sup> "to find out the principles which govern the acts of the gods;" they "are not to be explained by ordinary theories." It is true that the

in heaven make any racial distinctions, geographical conditions being alone responsible for such accidents. He refuses to accept any arithmetic of years when the calculators were men without cyclical signs or assisting script, and he concludes by declaring that if the ancestors of living men were not human beings, they are more likely to have been animals or birds than gods—by which last proposition he seems to indicate a belief in progressive evolution.

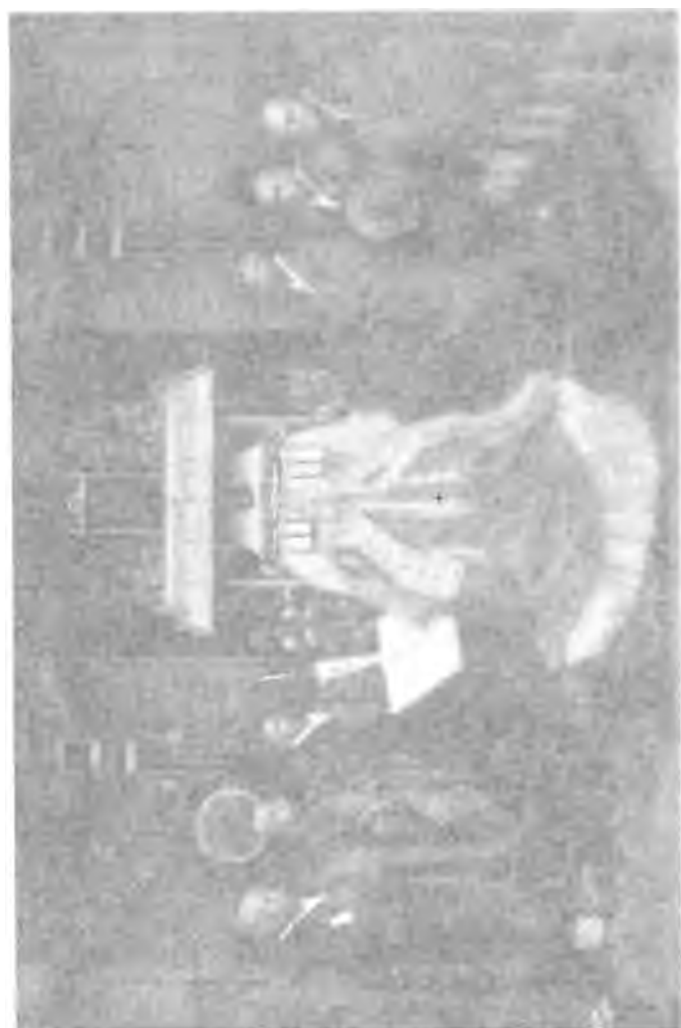
<sup>1</sup> This remarkable scholar and philosopher was born in 1730 and died in 1801. He is justly regarded by his countrymen as the greatest interpreter of their ancient faith. The brief review of his opinions given in the text is a summary of Sir Ernest Satow's analysis of his works in "The Revival of Pure *Shinto*." Nearly everything that we know of *Shinto* is due to the researches of Sir Ernest Satow.



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traditions of the creation and of its divine directors, as handed down from antiquity, involve the idea of acts which, judged by the petty standards of human philosophy, are accounted miracles. But if the age of the gods has passed away, if they no longer work world-fashioning and heaven-unrolling wonders, none the less are we surrounded on all sides by inexplicable miracles. The suspension of the earth in space; the functions of the human body; the flight of birds and insects through the air; the blossoming of plants and trees; the ripening of seed and fruit,—do not these things transcend human intelligence as hopelessly as the begetting of matter and the birth of the sun? And if it be called irrational to believe in gods that are invisible to human eyes, may we not answer that the existence of many things is unquestioningly accepted though our eyes cannot discern their shapes? Do we not know that sweet odours exist, and soft sounds; that the air caresses our cheek and that the wind blows over the sea? do we not know that fire is hot and water cold, though of the nature of heat and cold we know







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"The gods and goddesses, on the other hand, are not humanly limited. They are not bound by the physical laws of nature. In philosophy, we account for the existence of the gods has passed from the pre-work-world-fashion of the ancients, none the less, the gods are not gods by inexplicable fiat. They are gods in space and time, and they are not only; the flight of the eagle is not the flight of the bleat of the sheep. The flying of seed is not the falling of human seed. And if it is not the gods that are in the world, may we not answer that the gods are in the world unquestioningly? They can eyes and discern their world. Do we not know that sweet odors are sweet sounds? Do we not know that the wind blows over the sea? Do we not know that fire is hot and water cold? Do we not know and cold we know





FUNERAL SERVICE IN A SHINTO TEMPLE.







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nothing? "The principles that animate the universe," writes Hirata Atsutane, "are beyond the power of analysis, neither can they be fathomed by human intelligence. All statements founded on pretended explanations of them are to be rejected. All that man can think out and know is limited by the power of sight, of feeling and of calculation. What transcends those powers lies beyond the potential range of thought."

We shall not pause here to fit foreign analogies to this suggestive framework of Japanese conceptions. But it must be noted that side by side with an attitude so humble toward the mysteries of nature there was an almost fierce assertion of Japan's claim to be the repository of revealed truth. "Our country," says Hirata Atsutane, "owing to the facts that it was begotten by the two gods Izanagi and Izanami; that it was the birthplace of the Sun Goddess, and that it is ruled by her sublime descendants for ever and ever, as long as the universe shall endure, is infinitely superior to other countries, whose chief and head it is. Its people are honest and upright of heart, not given to useless



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theorising and falsehoods like other nations. Thus it possesses correct and true information with regard to the origin of the universe, information transmitted to us from the age of the gods, unaltered and unmixed, even in the slightest degree, with unsupported notions of individuals. This is the genuine and true tradition." Here again we leave the reader to find, if he pleases, parallel examples of defiant confidence based on an equally small grain of mustard seed.

From what has thus far been written it will be seen at once that ancestor worship was the basis of *Shinto*. The divinities, whether celestial or terrestrial, were the progenitors of the nation from the sovereign and the princes surrounding the throne to the nobles who discharged the services of the State and the soldiers who fought its battles. The worship of these gods seems to have been originally conducted in the open air. Temples and shrines were not constructed until the first century before the Christian era. Very soon, however, the children of the deities found no lack of set places to pray, for from the *Naiako* and *Geko* of Ise, the Mecca of Japan, to the



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miniature *Miyas* that dotted the rice plains, thousands of shrines might be counted throughout the realm, and every house had its *Kamidana*, a tiny *Shinto* altar, before which morning and evening prayers were said with unfailing regularity and devoutness. Many Western critics have alleged that *Shinto* is not a religion; that it provides no system of morals, offers no ethical code, has no ritual, and does not concern itself about a future state. We shall deal presently with these assertions. Here we have only to say that, creed or cult, *Shinto* may certainly claim to have established a strong hold upon the heart of the people. The annual pilgrimages to the Shrines of Ise, where the Goddess of the Sun and the Goddess of Abundance are worshipped, attract tens of thousands of devotees each spring, and the renovation of the buildings every twentieth year<sup>1</sup> rouses the whole nation to a fervour of faith. Not a peasant believes that his farm can be productive, not a merchant that his business can thrive unless he

<sup>1</sup> Being constructed of wood, the buildings are so perishable that instead of resorting to a process of constant repair, new edifices are erected on an alternate site every second decade.



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pays, or honestly resolves to pay, at least one visit to Ise during his lifetime, and no household believes itself purged of sin unless its members clasp hands and bow heads regularly before the *Kami-dana*. *Shinto*, in truth, is essentially a family creed. Its roots are entwined around the principle of the household's integrity and perpetuity. Nothing that concerns the welfare of the family or the peace and prosperity of the household is too small or too humble for apotheosis. There is a deity of the caldron in which the rice is boiled as there is a deity of thunder; there is a god of the saucepan as there is a divinity of the harvest; there is a spirit of the "long-rope well" as there is a spirit of physical perfection. All the affairs of man are supposed to have a claim on the benevolent solicitude of these immortal guardians. In the ritual for invoking fortune on behalf of the Imperial palace at the time of building—the ritual of dedication—the spirits of rice and of timber are invoked, with the utmost precision of practical detail, to forefend the calamity of serpents crawling under the threshold, the calamity of birds flying in



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through the smoke-holes in the roof and defiling the food, the calamity of pillars loosening and joints creaking at night. On the other hand, all great affairs of State, all national enterprises, are similarly intrusted to the fostering care of the deities. As for rituals, details of ceremonial and rules for the guidance of priests and priestesses, they fill fifty volumes and descend to the utmost minutiae, the part taken by each functionary being carefully set forth, from that of the chief cook who laid on the fire and set the rice pot over it, or that of the superintendent of fisheries who fanned the flame, to that of the priest-noble who recited the ritual. The presentation of offerings to the tutelary deity or to the departed spirit just enrolled among the immortals formed an important part of the ceremonial, and the ritual used on the occasion enumerated the offerings,<sup>1</sup> while at the same time setting forth the grounds for paying reverence to the deceased. These funeral orations often rise to heights of

<sup>1</sup> The offerings varied more or less, but generally included a bow, a sword, a mirror, a silk baldaquin, "bright cloth, glittering cloth, fine cloth and coarse cloth," *saké* jars, sweet herbs and bitter herbs, "things narrow of fin and wide of fin," etc., all of which, to use the language of the ritual, were "piled up like ranges of hills."



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remarkable pathos, dignity and beauty, and are read aloud by the chief priest in a manner at once simple and impressive.

However obscure the origin of some among the multitude of observances prescribed by the sacred canon, an analysis of the twenty-seven great rituals shows that the main purpose of worship was to secure the blessings of peace and plenty. The family on earth associated itself by offerings and orisons with the family in heaven. Among the whole twenty-seven rituals<sup>1</sup> one only is designed to avert the influence of evil spirits. It does not appear to have entered largely into the theory of the creed that enmities formed on this side of the grave continued to be active in the regions beyond. The disquieting contingency was there indeed. The curse of a dying foe might be fulfilled by his spirit after death, and services of exorcism were prescribed to meet the emergency. But this *tatari* was confined to the generation responsible for its origin. The general conception was that of kindly spirits, from the

<sup>1</sup> The language of these rituals is sometimes full of fervour and eloquence. Their perusal, as translated by Sir Ernest Satow in "Ancient Japanese Rituals," will well repay the trouble.



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all-father and the all-mother to the shades of departed parents and relatives, ready to extend useful tutelage to their mortal descendants. The capacity to work injury after death was explained by a theory corresponding with the Occidental idea of the duality of man's nature. Every human being possessed a rough spirit and a gentle spirit. The former, when stirred to intense activity by a sense of suffering or the passion of resentment, acquired the potentiality of a mischievous agent acting independently of matter, and could even assume the shape of the sufferer or the avenger for the purpose of tormenting the injurer or the enemy. Such phenomena were not necessarily preceded by the liberation of the divine element from its mortal prison: they might take place during life, and even without the knowledge of the person exercising the telepathic influence. Nor were they confined to the rough spirit. The gentle spirit also, under strongly emotional circumstances, became capable of defying the restraints of time and space. The permanent existence of evil gods, however, constituted an article of the faith.



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*Shinto* did not propound to its disciples the inscrutable problem of an omniscient, omnipotent and all-merciful deity creating beings foredoomed to eternal torture, and licensing a Satan to ply the trade of tempter and perverter. It adopted the simpler theory that the malign demons were the outcome of a fault of creation. Born of the corruption contracted by Izanagi during his visit to the land of the shades, these wicked spirits, who "glittered like fireflies and were as disorderly as spring insects; who gave voices to rocks, tree-stumps, leaves and the foam of the green sea,"<sup>1</sup> had been expelled from terrestrial regions but not annihilated: they continued to interfere mischievously in human affairs, and it was necessary to propitiate them with offerings, music and dancing. Their doings did not, however, seriously perturb the even tenor of daily life. There never was any tendency to regard the world as a battlefield of demons and angels, as was the case in mediæval Europe, or to entertain a Manichean belief in the frequent victories of evil spirits.

<sup>1</sup> Closely resembling the "Pottergeist" of the Germans and having some affinities with the "Pixies" of Anglo-Saxondom.





EXTERIOR GALLERY OF JAPANESE TEMPLE.



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Shintôism, as handed to its disciples the doctrine of the omnipotent, omniscient, and all-potent God, creating beings foredoomed to evil, and according a Satan to ply the temptations of the evil pervetter. It adopted the notion, however, that the malign demons were created out of a fault of creation. Born of the evil impulse, contracted by Izanagi during his visit to the land of the shades, these wicked spirits, who "glittered like pebbles and were as disorderly as spring mist," who gave voices to rocks, tree-stumps, leaves and the foam of the green sea, had been expelled from terrestrial regions but not annihilated: they continued to interfere needlessly in human affairs, and it was necessary to propitiate them with offerings, music and dancing. Their doings did not, however, seriously perturb the even tenor of daily life. There was no tendency to regard the world as a battlefield of demons and angels, as was the case in medieval Europe, or to entertain a Manichean notion of the frequent victories of evil spirits.

<sup>1</sup> That is the "Fetichist" of the Germans and having to do with the "Fey" of Anglo-Saxondom.





EXTERIOR GALLERY OF JAPANESE TEMPLE.







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In the temples there were no images, nor was any object exposed to invite the adoration of the worshipper. Yet the presence of the tutelary deity was assumed, and, as evidence of the fact, a sacred pillow for the god's repose, or some other "august spirit-substitute," was enclosed within the shrine. Very often a mirror stands in the body of these temples, and foreign visitors generally suppose it to be an essential part of the visible paraphernalia. But it owes its presence in public to Buddhist influences: the rules of pure *Shinto* relegate it to the obscurity of the shrine. Two objects, however, are always openly associated with a *Shinto* shrine, the *go-hei* and the *torii*. The latter, as its name indicates,<sup>1</sup> was originally designed to typify a perch for birds. In *Shinto* traditions it is associated with the eclipse of the Sun Goddess. Outside the cave into which the goddess had retreated, cocks, collected by the gods, were set crowing to create the impression that even without the rising of the orb of day morn had dawned. Barn-door fowls thus found a place among the offerings to

<sup>1</sup> From *tori* (a bird) and *i* (to rest, or perch).



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the goddess through all time, and the *torii* typified the fact. Its degradation in later ages to the rank of a gate is an error for which its shape is doubtless responsible, but it may generally be seen in its true *rôle* beside the little shrines of Inari<sup>1</sup> where the peasant prays. The *go-hei*, or sacred offering, takes the form of a wand supporting a pendant of paper zigzags. It represents the coarse cloth and fine cloth that always appeared among the offerings. From symbolising the concrete devotion of the worshipper and its abstract acceptance by the deity, the *go-hei* became, by an easily conceived transition, an evidence of the favouring presence of the worshipped spirit, and in that character acquired powers of inspiration the exercise of which has been made the basis of a theory of esoteric *Shinto*.<sup>2</sup> From what has already been said about the "rough spirit" and the "gentle spirit," the reader will

<sup>1</sup> Thousands of these miniature shrines are to be seen in the rice-fields or in the vicinity of hamlets. They are erected in honour of the Spirit of Food. As to the name "Inari," it is said to be that of a place by some sinologues, but the general belief in Japan makes it a contraction of *ina-ninai*, or the rice-carrier. The fox is supposed to be an agent of the god; hence the stone foxes usually placed near the shrine.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Percival Lowell has published a delightfully written volume on this subject.



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not be surprised to find in *Shinto* practices a repetition of the phenomenon that has puzzled so many minds from the days of Njal and his *forspan* to those of Charcot and second sight. The *aura epileptica* blew in the old Japan and still blows in the new, as it has blown among all nations in all ages. Before *Shinto* shrines one may constantly see how what some folks call "mountain-moving faith," and others more prosaically regard as an abnormal mood produced by concentrated attention and abeyance of the will — one may see that unconscious cerebration take the form of a hypnotic trance with telepathic capabilities, wonderful and inscrutable to vulgar minds. These "spirit-possession" find their prototypes in the frenzy of the goddess that danced before the cave of the Sun Deity, and in the oracle-uttering mood of the Empress Jingo. Sometimes this idea that the spirits of the deified may be induced to obey the summons of their earthly relatives is played with by mercenary charlatans, as was and is the case in Europe; sometimes it appears to be capable of exciting a nervous ecstasy during which the body becomes insensible to pain.



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We need not dwell upon these things. They have their counterpart everywhere and can scarcely be regarded as distinctive of *Shinto*. Let us turn rather to the contention so often advanced, that *Shinto* has no code of morals and does not concern itself about a future state. As to the former argument, it is scarcely necessary to point out that the intuitive system of morality receives its fullest recognition when ethical sanctions are not coded. If man derives the first principles of his duties from intuition; if he be so constituted that the notion of right carries with it a sense of obligation, then a schedule of rules and regulations for the direction of everyday conduct becomes not only superfluous but illogical. That was the moral basis of *Shinto*. If the feet were kept steadfast in the path of truth, the guardianship of the gods was assured even without praying for it. The all-creator took care when he fashioned man that a knowledge of good and evil should be an integral part of the structure. Unless such a knowledge be assumed, man becomes inferior to the animals, all of which have a guiding instinct, though its



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development is not equal to that of human beings. To have acquired the conviction that there is no ethical system to be learned and practised, is to have acquired the method of acting as the gods act. For the rest, precept is far inferior to example. The former suggests itself only when the latter is absent. Show a man a record of noble deeds actually performed, and he will burn with a desire to emulate them, whereas a statement of the principles of courage and loyalty will leave him comparatively unmoved. The gods are not to be importuned with prolix prayers, or asked to condone crimes knowingly committed. The petitions of humanity are wafted by the wind to the plain of high heaven: —“I say, with awe, deign to bless me by correcting the unwilling faults which, seen and heard by you, I have committed; by blowing off and clearing away the calamities which evil gods might inflict; by causing me to live long<sup>1</sup> like the hard and lasting rock, and by repeating to the gods of heavenly origin and to the gods of earthly origin the petitions which I present

<sup>1</sup> It was believed that man depended on the wind for his breath.



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every day, along with your breath, that they may hear with the sharp-earedness of the forth-galloping colt." Such was the morning prayer to the Spirit of the Wind. Apart from the satisfaction of well-doing, uniform obedience to the dictates of conscience brought its reward. It is true that the rule did not always hold; the evil sometimes prospered while the good experienced misfortunes. That was because the "Spirits of Crookedness" were occasionally able to defy the "Spirits of Benevolence." But, on the whole, the hatred of the "Invisible Gods"<sup>1</sup> was assured to wrong-doers. Hirata Atsutane says "the deities bestow blessings and happiness on those who practise virtue as effectually as though they appeared before us bearing treasures. And even if the virtuous do not obtain material recompense, they enjoy exemption from disease, good fortune and longevity, and their descendants prosper. Pay no attention to the praise or blame of fellow-men, but act so that you need

<sup>1</sup> The terrestrial deities ruled over the "Unseen." They were the god O-kuni-nushi (who yielded the sovereignty of Japan to Ninigi) and his consort Suseri-bime. On them devolved the direction of everything that could not be ascribed to a definite author; as the tranquillity of the State, its prosperity, and the lives and fortunes of its people.



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not be ashamed before the Gods of the Unseen. If you desire to practise true virtue, learn to stand in awe of the Unseen, and that will prevent you from doing wrong. Make a vow to the God that rules over the Unseen, and cultivate the conscience implanted in you, and thus you will never wander from the Way."

But if virtue might be expected to bring some recompense in this world, fear of eternal punishment did not reënforce the promptings of conscience, nor did hope of reward beyond the grave constitute a dominant incentive to well-doing. An under-world did, indeed, find a place in the system. The "August Creator" descended to it in search of his spouse after her demise in travail of fire. The god of the sea, weary of banishment from the heavenly plains, would fain have gone to his mother beneath the earth. The efficacy of the Sacred Jewel consisted in holding back the believer from the road to the region of the dead. But this under-world was not connected with any idea of merciless tortures inflicted on the damned through endless ages. It was simply the place of darkness—the moon, according to some, the

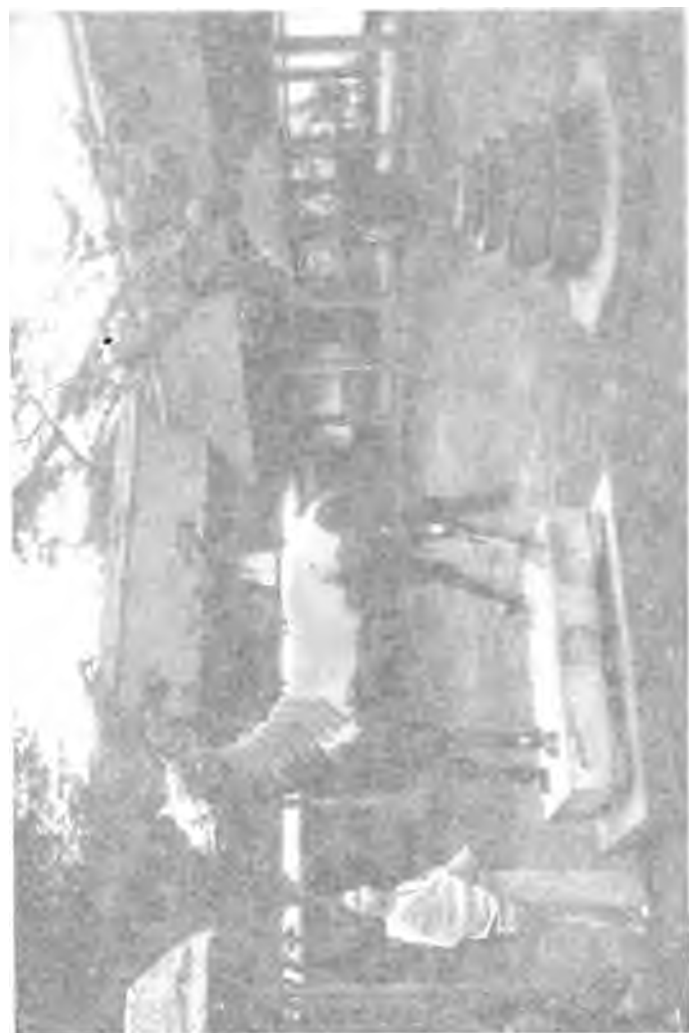


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depths of the ocean according to others. The finite was not followed by an infinite aftermath of misery. The worship of the beloved and revered dead precluded all idea of their condemnation to everlasting torment, just as it necessarily included the conception of the soul's immortality. Rituals were not read or offerings piled up to victims of annihilation. Those who passed the portals still lived, a larger, a more potential, a deathless life, waiting to be joined by those they had preceded. Within every man was something of the god, and though after death one obtained higher place than another in the divine hierarchy, all were sure of apotheosis.<sup>1</sup> The issue of human enterprises, the distribution of fortune's favours, were considered to be under the control of the tutelary deities, the ancestral spirits, but men were themselves endowed with capacity for dis-

<sup>1</sup> "The spirits of the dead," writes Hirata Atsutane in the *Tama no Mihashira*, "continue to exist in the unseen world, which is everywhere about us. They all become gods of varying character and degrees of influence. Some reside in temples built in their honour; others never leave their tombs. They continue to render service to their prince, parents, wife and children as when in the body." Elsewhere he says, "You cannot hope to live more than a hundred years under the most favourable circumstances, but as you will go to the unseen realm of O-kuni-nushi after death and be subject to his rule, learn betimes to bow down before him."





PRINCE HOUSE - 1911



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death was not according to others. The Japanese was tormented by an infinite aftermath of misery, the worship of the beloved and revered dead included an idea of their condemnation to everlasting torment, just as it necessarily included the conception of the soul's immortality. Prayers were not read or offerings piled up to temptations of annihilation. Those who passed the portals still lived, a larger, a more potential, a deathless life, waiting to be joined by those they had preceded. Within every man was something of the god, and though after death one obtained higher place than another in the divine hierarchy, all were sure of apotheosis.<sup>1</sup> The issue of human enterprises, the distribution of fortune's favours, were considered to be under the control of the tutelary deities, the ancestral spirits, but men were themselves endowed with capacity for dis-

<sup>1</sup> "The spirits of the dead," writes Hirata Atsutane in the *Tama no maki*, "continue to exist in the unseen world, which is everywhere present. They all become gods of varying character and degrees of power. Some reside in temples built in their honour; others never leave their tombs. They continue to render service to their prince, their father, their wife and children as when in the body." Elsewhere he says, "We cannot hope to live more than a hundred years under the most favourable circumstances, but as you will go to the unseen realm of the gods, you must after death and be subject to his rule, learn betimes to bow down before him."





BRONZE HORSE AT SUWA TEMPLE, NAGASAKI.







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tinguishing between good and evil, and with strength to follow their judgment so tenaciously as to qualify for fellowship with the denizens of high heaven. At the same time, error was theoretically avoidable and should therefore have been practically unpardonable, but sins might be expiated or forgiven. The sovereign occupied the position of the nation's high priest. Twice annually he celebrated the great festival of general purification by which the people were purged of offences and pollutions and saved from consequent calamities. Every family also kept within the *Kami-dana* an amulet consisting of pieces of the sacred wand used at these festivals, the possession of the token being supposed to ward off the effects of evil doing. The final use to which these pieces of wood were put is curious. They had to be exchanged every half year for new fragments, and the old were employed to light the fire under a bath for the virgin priestesses who danced at the festival of purification.

A striking feature of this creed was the high place it assigned to woman and the value it attached to female virtue. Of the cleanliness



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that it inculcated much has been written ; of the lustrations that preceded every sacred rite ; of the shrinking from every source of pollution and contamination ; of the simplicity of every ceremonial apparatus ; of the unvaried rusticity observed in the architecture of the temples, and of the unsculptured, unornamented purity of the timber used in their construction. It has been shown, too, in previous chapters, that excessive dread of contamination led to violations of a far higher duty ; that the sick were not duly tended and that the maimed or deceased were often thrust out to die. Charity, indeed, was a virtue scarcely suggested by the *Shinto* cosmogony and not inculcated by the rituals or ceremonials of the creed. Kindness to animals receives isolated recognition,<sup>1</sup> but "the golden rule" is not written between the lines of any prayer or any legend.

<sup>1</sup> A hare, desiring to cross from a mid-ocean island to the mainland, taunted the sea-sharks by alleging that its tribe numbered more than theirs. By way of practical test, it invited them to range themselves in line between shore and shore. That done, the hare, jumping from back to back and professing to count as it leaped, reached its desired destination. But untimely conceit prompted it to jeer before its feet were fairly planted on dry land, and by the last shark in the line its skin was torn off. As it lay writhing and weeping a band of deities approached. The elder brothers of O-kuni-nushi (the terrestrial ruler of Japan), they were journeying to pay court to Princess Yakimi of Inaba, whom they all



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The part assigned to woman, however, distinguishes *Shinto* from other Oriental cults or creeds, especially from the patriarchal system of the Chinese with which it is often confounded. In China a girl-child being disqualified to conduct ancestral worship, her birth is counted a misfortune and the preservation of her life a burden. In *Shinto* the principal objects of national adoration the deities worshipped at the grand shrines of Ise are the Sun Goddess and the Goddess of Food. Among the attributes assigned to the former, in addition to her prime functions, are those of selecting the guests or frequenters of the Emperor's abode, of correcting and softening discontent and unruliness, of keeping the male and female attendants in order, of preventing princes, councillors and functionaries from indulging their independent inclinations. At the foundation and construction

loved. Observing the hare's misery, they bade it bathe in the brine of the sea and lie thereafter exposed to sun and wind ; by which unkindly prescription the animal's sufferings were doubled. Presently O-kuni-nushi, who had been degraded by his brothers to the position of baggage-carrier, came along bearing his burden. He told the unhappy hare to wash in the fresh water of the river and roll its body in the pollen of the sedges, and being thus restored, it promised that he, not his brothers, should win the princess, which so fell out.



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of sacred buildings, young virgins cleared and levelled the ground, dug holes for the corner posts, took the axe and made the first cut in the trees to be felled for timber. A priestess was the central figure in the great ceremony of purification at the Kasuga temple; a young girl cleaned the shrine; women and girls on horse-back moved in the procession. After the sacrificial vessels and chests of offerings followed carriages containing some of the Emperor's female attendants. Even the wind was under the control of a female deity as well as a male, for to the disciples of *Shinto* the wind did not present itself as a fierce, turbulent agent of nature, but rather as an ether filling the space between earth and sky, the ladder by which spirits ascended to heaven. When Susa-no-o, expelled from the company of the gods, repaired to earth, his first exploit was to save a maiden from an eight-headed dragon which, year by year, had devoured one of her seven sisters. It was to a priest-princess that the Emperor Sujin intrusted the sacred mirror and sword after a divine revelation that they must



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no longer be kept in his own palace. It was by her niece, the subsequent depositary of the insignia, that the site of the Ise shrine was chosen. Virgin priestesses danced in honour of the gods of each locality, and the birth of three maidens from the fragments of the "Impetuous Male Deity's" sword was held to prove the purity of his intentions. From the earliest times, legendary or historical, the sovereign was surrounded by a number of females, and down to the reign of the present Emperor's immediate predecessor, women alone were admitted to the Imperial presence, in accordance with the belief that among the eight tutelary deities of the Mikado one represented the female influence surrounding the throne and imparting a gentle smoothness to the ruler's relations with the ruled.

The high rank accorded to woman in the *Shinto* system, the important functions assigned to her and the value attaching to virginal purity are thus amply proved. But while the beauty of virginity was recognised, no merit attached to celibacy. The maidens engaged in the service of



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the gods must preserve their chastity during the period of ministration, but after they had quitted the priesthood no obstacle stood in the way of their marriage. Neither do we find any direct or indirect inculcation of the principle of monogamy. On the contrary, the chief of the terrestrial deities when, by a display of pity to an animal, he had won the hand of a princess, for whose love he was his brothers' rival, made her his second wife and, moreover, became the father of many children by other women.

*Shinto* traditions offer no distinct precedent for a custom characteristic of the educated Japanese in all ages, the custom of resorting to suicide as an honourable exit from a humiliating or hopeless situation. One incident, indeed, may possibly be quoted as the prototype of the practice. The son of the chief terrestrial deity, when he decided to abandon his right of succession in favour of the delegates of heaven, trod on the edge of his boat so as to overturn it, and with his hands crossed behind his back in token of submission, disappeared — abdicated and killed himself, in simpler language. We have no warrant for



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assuming, however, that the example of the deity had any influence in establishing the Japanese habit of anticipating surrender by suicide. Yet it is plain that a creed which divests death of all terrors by representing it as a prelude to apotheosis, must have helped to make suicide easy. But it should also have tended to impart to death the character of emancipation from the body's thralldom, whereas the history of the Japanese people does not show that escape from life ever presented itself seriously to cultured minds as euthanasia, a means of eluding the pangs of disease or preventing the dotage of age. Japan never had a Seneca or a Hegesias. A man did not abandon life because he counted the loss a blessing or a boon, or because he regarded the grave as a place of rest. When existence became an intolerable punishment, the victim of destitution or cruelty sometimes chose the last road to freedom, and it was a common habit of lovers, when all hope of union in life had disappeared, to die in each other's arms.<sup>1</sup> But we

<sup>1</sup> This is a complete answer to the shallow critics who allege that love, in the Occidental sense of the term, is not known in Japan.



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must look below the surface to discover causes responsible for the singular proneness to self-sacrifice that distinguished the Japanese *Samurai* in all eras. Doubtless during the long centuries of warfare described in previous chapters, a certain indifference to death must have been educated by the constant necessity of inflicting it, and as in Rome before the time of Domitian, so in Japan before the *Meiji* era (1867), suicide secured a political offender against an ignominious fate and the confiscation of his goods. The influence of *Shinto* in this matter, however, is probably to be sought chiefly in the basis that it established for loyalty. The sovereign and all the princes of the blood as well as their noble scions were members of the *Kobetsu*; in other words, belonged to the tribe lineally descended from the celestial deities; the other heads of patrician families represented the offspring of the terrestrial deities, and were comprised in the *Shimbetsu*. The country was the country of the gods. No other State was entitled to equality with it. The mind of the Mikado was theoretically in perfect harmony of thought and feeling







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and look below the surface to discover responsible for the singular phenomenon of suicide that disenchanted the Japanese in all ages. Doubtless during the long centuries we have described in previous chapters, a certain tolerance to death must have been educated by the constant necessity of inflicting it, and as in Rome before the time of Domitian, so in Japan before the *Meiji* era (1867), suicide secured a political offender against an ignominious fate and the confiscation of his goods. The influence of *Shinto* in this matter, however, is probably to be sought chiefly in the basis that it established for loyalty. The sovereign and all the princes of the blood as well as their noble vassals were members of the *Kobetsu*; in other words, belonged to the tribe lineally descended from the celestial deities; the other heads of families represented the offspring of terrestrial deities, and were comprised in the *Shinryu*. The country was the country of the sovereign. No other State was entitled to equality with it. The mind of the Mikado was directed to the perfect harmony of thought and feeling





INTERIOR OF ONE OF THE LARGEST TEMPLES, NIKKO.







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with the mind of the goddess, his ancestress. The Imperial functions, summed up in the common term, *matsuri-goto*, or "worshipping," were merely to pray for the people, to love them and to exact their obedience. The people had only one duty, to obey. Out of this belief there grew a passionate sense of loyalty, fealty and patriotism that led men to court death, not merely for the sake of averting immediately threatened ills from a sovereign or a liege lord, but even for the purpose of emphasising a protest against courses that might produce ills. Faithful vassals, after fruitlessly exhorting their feudal chief against acts of misrule, injustice or dissipated excess, committed their advice to writing and sealed its sincerity with their blood. Parents sacrificed their children to save the sons of those to whom they owed allegiance. Retainers deliberately laid down their lives to avenge the wrongs of a deceased master.

We are here brought face to face with the question whether *Shinto* should be regarded as a creed indigenous to Japan or as an importation from abroad. Japan owed so much to



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China in early days that the borrowing of a creed would not have greatly increased the debt or seriously shocked any patriotic instinct. We have already seen that plausible grounds exist for attributing the bases of Japanese mythology to Chinese traditions, and the posthumous names of prehistoric *Mikados* to foreign sources. It must be confessed, however, that the process of differentiating the native from the alien is hampered by the constant difficulty of discerning whether the things adopted were actually Chinese systems or merely Chinese methods of systemisation. A man taught to write after he reaches adult years is not unlikely to take the rules of literary composition and even the terminology of his teachers as well as their script, though the thoughts he sets down may be his own. That certainly was often the case with the Japanese, and it becomes necessary to look very closely before finally distinguishing the indigenous from the exotic. Thus Confucianism, a system of ethics widely embraced by the educated classes in Japan, has been credited with supplying some of the central



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ideas of *Shinto*, and the theory is superficially plausible. There had existed in China for centuries before the days of Confucius a belief in a supreme power and in the existence of some special channel of communication between that power and the ruler of the State, so that the latter acted as mediator for his subjects. The relation between the Emperor of Japan and the Sun Goddess finds here an analogy. But Confucius would have set aside the *Shinto* cosmogony as something wholly beyond the range of rational speculation. He recognised the power of an impersonal heaven, but he limited his moral horizon to things visible and temporal, and his recorded conduct could not possibly be reconciled with the *Shinto* faith in the direction of nature's courses and of human fortunes by a hierarchy of deities. That man should devote himself earnestly to the duties due to men, and while respecting spiritual beings should keep aloof from them—that was the Confucian definition of wisdom. He did not, as is frequently supposed, institute the worship of ancestors; it had existed in China for centuries before his time. He did



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not even directly inculcate the propriety of such a practice. As to a future state he declined to predicate anything about the world beyond the grave. He did not even commit himself to an admission that sentient existence might be continued after death. Life was a mystery in his eyes; death equally inscrutable. In the vague possibilities of numbers and diagrams he vainly sought an explanation of the phenomena of the physical universe, and the sole outcome of his cosmical studies was a discovery that if the span of his life permitted fifty years' uninterrupted groping among the pages of the Book of Changes (*Yih King*) he might hope to reach the truth. In one important respect his philosophy corresponded with *Shinto*: it was inductive. The rule of life for men in all their relations was to be found within themselves; heaven had conferred on every human being a moral sense, compliance with which would keep him always in the right path. He did not recognise, however, that consideration for woman and her chivalrous treatment should be catalogued among the promptings of conscience. With the high place



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assigned to woman in the *Shinto* cosmogony and the *Shinto* ceremonials he would have been absolutely unsympathetic. Confucianism, in short, was pure secularism. Faithful followers of the Chinese sage lived as units of their families, thoughtless of a hereafter, and persuaded that the recompense of their acts would be found, if not in their own fortunes, then in those of their descendants.

It is thus easy to see how greatly Confucianism differed from *Shinto*, while, at the same time, both had much in common. We have here alluded to the similarities and dissimilarities of the two systems, not simply for the sake of establishing the independence of *Shinto*, but also, and mainly, because, from the time of Japan's first acquaintance with Chinese literature, Confucianism won for itself a firm place in the minds of her educated classes. It came to her strengthened and supplemented by the genius of Mencius, and in some respects it supplied an evident want. *Shinto*, providing no moral code, and relying solely on the promptings of conscience for ethical guidance, was too much of an abstrac-



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tion to satisfy the ordinary mind. Confucianism, as elaborated by Mencius, offered a system of morals avowedly based on inductive sanctions yet evidently indorsed by the lessons of experience. To a profound belief in the innate goodness of human nature it added plain expositions of the four fundamental virtues, benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom. It taught that the first aim of administration should be the material good of the people; the second, their education. It indicated divine ordination in human affairs, and defined death in the discharge of duty as compliance with that ordination, a disgraceful death as a departure from it; which canon secured implicit obedience from the Japanese in every age. It bade men regard suffering and misfortune as Heaven's instruments for stimulating the mind, bracing the heart and compensating defects—a precept to which the Japanese owe much of their stoicism in adversity and their cheerfulness in poverty. It defined society as a compound of five relationships—sovereign and subject; husband and wife; father and son; elder brother and younger brother; friend and



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friend ; the first four linked together by the principle of righteous and benevolent rule on the one side, and righteous and sincere submission on the other ; the last by the mutual desire of promoting virtue. Side by side with these and other equally noble bases of ethics, it laid down an axiom which never obtained open indorsement in Japan, but which any reader following our historical retrospect in previous chapters must have again and again detected underlying the conduct of prominent actors upon the political stage. Confucius and Mencius alike held that the throne is an institution of heaven, but what the former's teaching only implied, the latter's boldly formulated, namely, that the claim of "divine right" ceases to be valid unless it inures to the people's good. The people were the most important element in the Chinese Sage's conception of a nation. If the sovereign's rule were injurious to them, he must be dethroned. No Japanese in any epoch would have subscribed to such a doctrine in its naked outlines. Yet in practice it received constant though limited obedience, and the methods of obedience show striking conformity with the



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sequence of Mencius's prescriptions. For the philosopher laid down that the task of removing an unworthy ruler should be undertaken, first, by a member of the ruler's family ; secondly, by a high minister acting purely with a view to the public weal ; and, thirdly, failing either of these, by some subordinate "instrument of heaven." Mencius did not inculcate sedition, regicide or open violence ; the standard to be raised was that not of rebellion but of righteousness. In turning over the pages of Japan's annals have we not repeatedly seen that, while the "divine right" was uniformly recognised in theory, prince after prince, minister after minister, subordinate after subordinate did not scruple to contrive the compulsory retirement of sovereign, *Shogun*, or feudal chief, easily persuading himself, or being honestly forced by circumstances to believe, that his own elevation to the place of the deposed ruler would make for the good of the people? *Shinto* educated no such tendency. Buddhism did not educate it. Whence, then, its origin but in Chinese philosophy ?<sup>1</sup> It has become

<sup>1</sup> Motoori Motonaga, the celebrated exponent of "Pure Shinto" in the eighteenth century, indorses the above view which we have arrived at by direct comparison of the Chinese philosophy and Japanese





TEMPLE BUILDING AT KAWASAKI



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of the emperor's prescriptions. For the philosopher held that the task of removing an evil from the world should be undertaken, first, by a monarch, secondly, by a high official, and, thirdly, by a high noble with a view to the public good, and, lastly, by acting either of these, by some means, "in accordance of heaven." Mencius did not advocate the use of subtle or open violence; the only rebellion he allowed was that not of rebellion but of expiation. In turning over the pages of the *Shintô* we were repeatedly seen that, although the right was uniformly recognised as primary, prince after prince, minister after minister, subordinate after subordinate did not scruple to contrive the compulsion of a monarch or sovereign, *Shogun*, or that he might be pursuing himself, or being dishonestly flattered, to persuade us to believe that his own character in the place of the emperor, ruler would be for the good of the people. *Shintô* did not show any tendency to acknowledge that not only the influence, then, its

[A note, that the *Shintô* is a "Pure Shintô" of the 17th century, and does not contain any of the great collection of the *Shintô* which are to be found in the *Shintô* of the 18th century.]





TEMPLE BELL AT KAWASAKI.







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crystallised in the ethics of the nation. Scarcely a Japanese, however lowly his origin or humble his station, lacks the conviction that he carries a natural mandate to redress wrong in a superior, and that the method of redress depends upon his own choice, provided that his failure in "submission" be compensated by strength of "sincerity" — the co-ordinates of loyal obedience. Practical illustrations of this characteristic will meet us presently in the field of modern Japanese politics, but it has seemed proper to set down the ethical fact here in the context of the philosophy from which it appears to have been derived. It is seen that Japan received from China a philosophy only. Her religion was her own, in so far as a future state, the immortality of the soul, the cosmogony and the providence of the gods were concerned.

If the reader asks why we venture to attribute to Chinese philosophy imported into Japan results that did not attend its propagandism in

history. He says that the ethics enumerated by the Sages of China may be reduced to two simple rules, "take other people's territory and hold it fast when you've got it," and he distinctly attributes to the influence of Chinese learning the contumacy shown toward the *Mikado* in the middle ages by the Hojo, the Ashikaga and others. He might have greatly extended his list and carried it back much farther.



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the land of its origin, we can only answer that the same seed may produce dissimilar fruit in different soils. The point might easily be elucidated, but it lies beyond the scope of our story.

The heading of this chapter will be seen to suggest a connection between the religious creed of the nation and the castes into which society was divided, and the suggestion has doubtless been strengthened by our passing reference to the *Kobetsu*, or tribe to which the sovereign and princes of the blood belonged—in other words, the tribe including all descendants of the Celestial Deities—and the *Shimbetsu*, or tribe composed of descendants of the Terrestrial Deities. Both traced the root of their genealogical tree to common ancestors, Izanagi and Izanami, but the *Kobetsu* represented the offspring of heaven at the brightest stage of its productive faculties, when the sun came into being, whereas the *Shimbetsu* owed their origin to an era when the lower forces of nature were evolved. Translating the myth into workaday words, it takes the form that the invaders of Japan, in the sixth century before the Christian era, found the islands already



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inhabited by men of such fine fighting qualities that mutual respect grew out of the struggle between the two, and the vanquished received in the new hierarchy a position little inferior to that assumed by the victors. Almost from the outset the two races intermarried, and as early as the first century before the Christian era, temples dedicated to the principal deities of each were taken under State tutelage, the sun, which the invaders worshipped, being placed at the apex of the pantheon, and the common gods of every-day life, the controllers of natural phenomena, being relegated to a lower, yet still divine, rank. There is evidence that this liberal policy was not adopted without a struggle, but with that we need not concern ourselves here. The chiefs of the two great tribes were priests as well as rulers. At the head of all stood the Mikado, the *Suberagi* of ancient nomenclature, who, within the precincts of the palace and by occasional visits to the principal shrines, performed religious rites on behalf of the nation's welfare; and immediately after him in order of dignity came the great families of Nakatomi,



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representing the *Kobetsu*, and Mononobe and Shimbe, representing the *Shimbetsu*. The heads of these houses possessed the right of disposing of the lives and properties of the members, and the same right devolved upon the heads of the various branches into which the original household became divided as time elapsed. The Nakatomi traced their descent to one of the principal councillors attached to the grandchild of the Sun Goddess when he descended to assume the rule of Japan; the Shimbe, to the deity that held the mirror and the *go-hei* before the cave on the immemorial occasion of her self-effacement; the Mononobe, to Susa-no-o himself. If the reader desires to remain serious in the presence of these statements, let him refresh his memory of the genealogical tables set out in the Old Testament. As for us, our business is merely to furnish interpretations of Japanese systems and Japanese ideas, not to depict a Garden of Eden without a serpent. Into whatever cloud-land of myth and marvel the line of these patriarchal families ascends, their title to divine origin has received the assent of all generations



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of Japanese, and the links that connect their pedigrees with our own prosaic era will be detected when we say that a branch of the Nakatomi changed their name to Fujiwara,<sup>1</sup> in the seventh century, an epoch at which administrative functions began to interest them more than sacerdotal; that they were subsequently separated into the five governing families (*Go-Sekke*); that up to the centralisation of the administration in 1868 the nominal prime minister of every sovereign after he came of age, and the regent during his minority, belonged to the Fujiwara; that the Mononobe family has eight representatives among the present nobility, one of them being the celebrated Count Katsu, who played such a conspicuous part in the Restoration of 1867; and that no hereditary *Shinto* official (*Kannushi*) of this *Meiji* era entertains or admits any doubt of his ancestors' consanguinity with some deity, great or small.

<sup>1</sup> It may be accepted as a historical fact that eight names instituted by the Emperor Temmu at the close of the seventh century corresponded pretty closely with our modern idea of titles of nobility. For example, members of the *Kobetsu* who became governors of provinces, received the name *Mabito*. Members of the same tribe hitherto called *Omi* were thenceforth designated *A-son*. Members of the *Shimbetsu* previously called *Muraji*, became *Suku-no*, and so on. We have not space to deal with such matters in detail.



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Of such materials is the Japanese nobility of to-day composed, for from some *Kobetsu* or *Shimbetsu* family all the holders of hereditary titles in modern times can trace their descent. If, however, there have been very blue-blooded patricians in Japan from the earliest days of its written history, there have also been very humble plebeians, and their story has at least as much human interest as the record of intriguing statesmen and ambitious captains.

When Ieyasu, the Tokugawa chief of whom so much has already been said, obtained control of the administration, the nation was divided into five castes—the Imperial family, the *ku-ge* or Court nobles, the *bu-ke* or military nobles, the *hei-min* or commoners, and the *sem-min* or despicable people. This order had been evolved by processes too complicated and various to be discussed here. The *ku-ge* resided in Kyoto within the shadow of the throne. They held various sinecures, but their active functions did not extend beyond performing and transmitting the elaborate ceremonials of which the Court was the centre. All the administrative duties



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were discharged by the *bu-ke*, in whose hands the temporal power rested absolutely. To meet the expenses of the Court the Tokugawa *Shogun* assigned an annual income of 80,000 *koku* of rice and from 80,000 to 500,000 *riyo* in money; allowances aggregating about a million *yen* of the present currency. For the whole body of *ku-ge*, however, numbering 139 families, the allowance was only 70,000 *koku* of rice, the most richly endowed house (*Konoike*) having 2,860 *koku* (representing about 85,000 *yen*). When it is remembered that the *Shogun* himself had an income of 4,288,400 *koku* (over fifty million *yen*) and that the eighteen principal *bu-ke* nobles enjoyed revenues varying from 150,000 to more than a million *koku* (one and three-fourths million to twelve million *yen*), the striking difference between the pecuniary positions of the *ku-ge* and the *bu-ke* becomes apparent. The life of the Court noble, in fact, was generally one of dignified and often grinding poverty. He had to eke out his scanty income by engaging in domestic industries such as were deemed appropriate to genteel indigence, for example, the shaping of chopsticks and the deco-



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ration of playing cards. The *ku-ge* now occupy due places among the five modern orders of nobility, prince, marquis, count, viscount and baron, but poverty is still written in very visible ink across the backs of their patents of nobility. The *hei-min*, or commoners, consisted of the farmers, artisans and merchants. They could not look back through long centuries to ancestors of either celestial or terrestrial divinity. They had not even the poor privilege of designating themselves by family names. As folks in England or America call a butler "James" or a coachman "John," so the gentry of old Japan spoke of "ironmonger Tarobei," or "haberdasher Sensaburo," and when Tarobei or Sensaburo chanced to meet the cortége of a nobleman *en route*, the "common fellow" had to kneel with his head in the dust until the last of the sworded retainers had passed. If he suffered from oppression at the hands of the local magnate in whose territory he worked he must suffer in silence; complaint to a higher power involved the penalty of death.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This fact forms the nucleus of a celebrated record of Japan in the first half of the seventeenth century. Sogoro, a village head-man, presented to the *Shogun* a petition protesting against the exactions of the *Sakura daimyo's* retainers. The petition effected its object, but Sogoro, his wife and three children were executed.







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of the *shōshō* and *shōshō* lords. The *ka ge* now occupy duties corresponding to the five modern orders of nobility, viz. duke, marquis, count, viscount and baron, but the *shōshō* and *shōshō* are written in very visible ink across the *shōshō* patents of nobility. The *hai-mu*, the *hai-mu* consisted of the farmers, artisans and laborers. They could not look back through their ancestors to ancestors of either celestial or terrestrial dignity. They had not even the poor privilege of designating themselves by family names. As folks in England or America call a butler "James" or a coachman "John," so the gentry of old Japan spoke of "ironmonger Tarobei," or "haberdasher Sensaburo," and when Tarobei or Sensaburo chanced to meet the cortege of a nobleman *en route*, the "common fellow" had to kneel with his head in the dust until the last of the sworded retainers had passed. If he suffered from oppression or wrong at the hands of the local magnate in whose territory he worked he must suffer in silence; complaint against superior power involved the penalty of death.<sup>1</sup> The *shōshō* form the nucleus of a celebrated record of Japan in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Sogoro, a village head man, presented to the *shōshō* a petition protesting against the exactions of the *shōshō* retainers. The petition effected its object, but Sogoro, and his wife and children were executed.





A FARMER AND HIS WIFE WEIGHING AND REELING SILK.







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There was, however, one notable compensation. Despite their degraded status the commoners managed to amass wealth. Here it should be observed that poverty was never any reproach in Japan. As a general rule the Japanese trouble themselves very little about one another's possessions. A conspicuously rich man is conspicuous, but a poor man is never poor so long as he remains respectable. Nothing conduces so largely to the grace of social intercourse in Japan as this absolute absence of the snobbism of wealth. How far back we must go for the first examples of this beautiful trait, or to what moral teaching it owes its origin, the Japanese themselves do not pretend to know. But the *Samurai*, as tradition faithfully describes him, always despised money and spurned the notion of toiling to amass it. Fealty and courage were his idols, self-sacrifice his ideal, and since the *Samurai* gave society its tone, we can understand that even a Court noble, a scion of the gods, toiling in the seclusion of his lowly home to win rice and vegetables for his children, violated no canon of dignity nor disturbed any estimate of the great *comme il faut*. But the



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commoner was always a commoner, by whatever standard of patrician ethics he regulated his doings, and since he was condemned to delve and spin he naturally valued the only reward that such operations could bring him. Among the *hei-min*, therefore, men of great substance were to be found. Kino-kuni-ya Bunzaemon, a merchant who flourished at the close of the seventeenth century, lived within a three-acre park in the most populous district of Tokyo. Yodoya Tatsugoro of Osaka inhabited a mansion covering 14,200 square yards, surrounded by a nine-acre garden, owned forty warehouses, possessed four detached villas, and employed a hundred and fifty domestic servants. Kiya Goemon of Kaga, whose property was confiscated in consequence of his having violated the veto against foreign trade, was found to be worth 3,980,000 *riyo*, equivalent to over thirty million *yen* of modern money. Thus the *hei-min* had his compensations, especially the farmer, who not infrequently was raised to the rank of a retainer, and suffered to carry the distinguishing badge of a gentleman — two swords.



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Who the "commoners" were originally, research does not indicate. One not unreasonable conjecture is that they belonged to a race of immigrants antecedent to either of the invading tribes represented by the *Kobetsu* and the *Shimbetsu* — a conjecture consistent with what has been written in a previous chapter about the marked physical differences between the plebeian and patrician types. Below them stood the "servile people;" so far below that a general epithet, *ryo-min*, or respectable people, differentiated all other sections of the nation from these outcasts of society. Yet the *sem-min*, as the proletariat were called, have a special claim on our attention, for, as we shall by and by see, they are connected with the origin of some of the most picturesque phases of Japanese life. The literal meaning of the word *sem-min* is "despised people," but since close affinities may be traced between the condition and occupations of this class and those of the Roman *servi*, the term "serf" seems apposite here.

It has been laid down as a principle by ethnologists that slavery never constitutes a vital



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element of any social system in which a theocratic organisation is established. Communities where the military order has obtained the ascendancy are the natural home of caste divisions which relegate the industrial and agricultural functions to serfs and slaves. We have traced a partial vindication of that theory in the story of the Japanese, among whom the tillers of the soil, the mechanic and the trader ranked as plebeians, or commoners, in comparison with the military patricians. But if the polity of Japan partook largely of the military character, it was purely theocratic in its alleged beginnings, and thus the social problems connected with it refuse to be solved by precedents derived from simpler organisations. The "commoners" (*hei-min*) certainly were not serfs or slaves, according to any acknowledged rendering of those terms, and even the "servile people," while some of them may unquestionably be classed as slaves, do not find their exact counterpart in any system that has come under the notice of Western historians. As far back as the middle of the fifth century of the Christian era Japanese annals refer to *sem-min*.



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They show us a nobleman who, being convicted of plotting against the Court (460 A.D.), was condemned to death, his posterity for eighty generations being degraded to the rank of common labourers. Thenceforth, various incidents, legal enactments and ordinances enable us to detect six causes which operated to produce *sem-min*; namely, crime, subjugation, debt, special circumstances of birth, naturalisation and kidnapping. Treason in every form and armed conquest were sources of State slaves, corresponding to the Roman *servi publici*. A rebel or a conspirator against the sovereign suffered death, frequently shared by his sons and brothers, and all the rest of his family as well as his property were confiscated. As for conquest, the rights conferred by it held against Japanese as well as against aliens. Raids made by Japanese generals into the Korean peninsula resulted in the capture of numerous Koreans who, being carried to Japan, were drafted into the ranks of the *sem-min*, and employed in various menial capacities. Probably also, though here we cannot speak with assurance, sections of the aboriginal



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inhabitants of Japan suffered the same fate after subjugation by the invaders, for, as our retrospect of history suggests, tribes not able to claim affinity with the *Kobetsu* or the *Shimbetsu* and yet declining to acknowledge the latter's authority until compelled to do so, were not likely to fare better than rebellious subjects of divine consanguinity. If the celebrated feud between the princely clans of Mononobe and Soga in the middle of the sixth century resulted in the sentencing of two hundred and seventy-three members of the Mononobe to perpetual servitude at a temple, contumacious autochthons certainly obtained no gentler terms. Turning now to debt as a source of serfdom, we observe that in very early eras its influence must have been considerable, for at the close of the seventh century the sovereign found it necessary to impose restrictions. Proclamation was then made that where a creditor prescribed serfdom as a penalty for failure to discharge a monetary obligation, interest must not be charged. Later on, the first code — promulgated at the beginning of the eighth century — sanctioned the principle that an insol-



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vent debtor's person might become the property of the creditor, but imposed legal limits of interest. Interest payable every sixtieth day was not to exceed one eighth of the principal, and even though a period of 480 days had elapsed, an amount of interest greater than the principal must not be exacted. The issue of serfs remained a serf, but, by a curious stretch of liberality, an immigrant from a foreign land who had been a serf in his own country, acquired his freedom on touching Japanese soil, though if he subsequently suffered degradation, any of his relatives following him to Japan shared his fate. The abduction and kidnapping of men and women and their sale into serfdom were practices against which laws had to be enacted in the eighth century. The crime was punished by a maximum penalty of three years' penal servitude. But here we find evidence of the large recognition accorded to rights of relationship, for the closer the degree of consanguinity between the person sold and the seller, the milder the penalty. A man selling his own parent or cousin became liable to two and a half years' penal servitude,



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but the sale of one's own child or grandchild involved only one year of punishment, and if the sale was that of a daughter, the law did not undertake to rehabilitate her.<sup>1</sup>

The co-operation of these various causes must have produced a considerable number of *sem-min*, and, indeed, the best statistics available indicate that the ratio was five per cent of the total population.<sup>2</sup> But it must not be supposed that the treatment of these serfs in Japan displayed cruelties like those practised in ancient Rome. There were five classes: guards of the Imperial sepulchres, servants employed in administrative offices, domestic servants, State serfs and private serfs. Men belonging to the first two classes differed little from ordinary subjects, and were

<sup>1</sup> With regard to the price at which a serf was valued, there is documentary evidence preserved among the archives of the Nara Court (eighth century). Three males, aged respectively 34, 22 and 15, were sold, the first two for a thousand sheaves of rice each, the third for seven hundred sheaves. Three females, aged 22, 20 and 15, sold at the same time, were appraised, the first two at eight hundred sheaves each, the last at six hundred. A hundred sheaves of rice represent a *koku*, which was equivalent to 1 *ryo* at that era, and now sells for 13 *yen*. Thus an adult male serf was valued at about 130 *yen*, and a female at about 100 *yen*.

<sup>2</sup> The population of Japan in the middle of the eighth century is estimated to have been 3,694,331, the ratio of the male and female elements being as 4.6 to 5.4. There were then 84,970 male serfs and 99,737 female.





FIG. 1. WHITTY WITH LIPS



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<sup>1</sup> With regard to the price at which a serf was valued, there is documentary evidence preserved among the archives of the Nani Court (eighth century). Three males, aged respectively 34, 20 and 15, were sold, the first two for a thousand six axes of rice each, the third for seven hundred axes. The females, aged 22, 20 and 15, sold at the same time, were valued at the same prices. The first two at eight hundred sheaves each, the last at six hundred. Sheaves of rice represent a *koku*, which was equivalent at that era, and now sells for 13 *yen*. Thus an adult male sold at about 130 *yen*, and a female at about 100 *yen*.

<sup>2</sup> The population of Japan in the middle of the eighth century is estimated to have been 3,094,321, the ratio of the male and female population being 4.6 to 5.4. There were then 84,970 male serfs and





BLACKSMITHS AND WHEELWRIGHTS.







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often rehabilitated. They had establishments of their own and could acquire property. Domestic serfs might be described, not incorrectly, as poor relatives who, generation after generation, earned a livelihood by performing menial household duties in families to which they were bound by ties of kith and kin. It seems a misnomer to call such persons "serfs," but they were so classed in old Japan. State serfs were captives made in war, or the domestic serfs—that is to say, the indigent relatives—of men convicted of offences involving degradation and confiscation. The lot of the serfs was ameliorated, rather than aggravated, by transfer to the State. Private serfdom seems to have been the worst condition of all. The private serf was bought and sold like any ordinary chattel, the only proviso being that the transaction must be duly registered. But the lash was not used to compel work, nor is there any record that the idea of chaining a serf ever suggested itself to a Japanese householder or official. It would appear, too, that the prospect of an aged person's dying without having tasted the sweets of freedom revolted ancient legislators.



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They enacted that if a State serf attained the age of sixty-six, or became incapacitated by disease, he should be promoted to be an official employee, and at seventy-six he was rehabilitated. Even a man who had been degraded for treason was restored to his old status when he reached the age of eighty. Other causes of manumission were emancipation,<sup>1</sup> judgment of a law court, extinction of a master's family, adoption of the Buddhist priesthood and meritorious service. A Buddhist priest had no social status; thus a serf entering the priesthood necessarily passed outside the pale of serfdom. But despite this disposition to lighten the lot of the serf, stringent measures were adopted to preserve the distinctions of caste. Nothing save the pride of rank prevented intermarriages between the military class and the commoners (*hei-min*). If, however, a member of the *bu-ke* or the *hei-min* married into the *sem-min*, the offspring of the union became a serf. Even among the serfs themselves, difference of grade originally constituted a barrier to

<sup>1</sup> Emancipated serfs were exempt from taxation during a period of three years from the date of rehabilitation.



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marriage.<sup>1</sup> These harsh enactments received modification at the beginning of the ninth century. Thenceforth the issue of a mixed marriage received the status of whichever parent stood higher in the social scale. But the spirit of exclusiveness underwent no change, and there is also evidence that in the long mediæval era of incessant war the practice of kidnapping young persons of both sexes and selling them into serfdom constituted one of the prominent abuses of the age. To the credit of the Tokugawa rulers stands the enactment of really drastic regulations against this evil. Capital punishment was prescribed by them for the kidnapper, and imprisonment with heavy fines for the agent of the abductor or the buyer of the abducted. The somewhat detailed nature of our reference to this matter is not merely because it has hitherto been virtually excluded from the purview of writers on Japan, but because its moral and social effects cannot be omitted from any ethical study of the

<sup>1</sup> The reader will observe that a serf marriage was legally recognised. It was not a mere *contubernium*, as in Rome. In many respects, as indeed might be expected, the condition of the serf or slave in Japan resembled that of his predecessor in Athens.



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nation, and because it will meet us by and by in other and unexpected directions.

It has thus been shown that the patrician sections of the nation had their creed and their cult. They enjoyed the guardianship of the celestial and terrestrial divinities from whom they claimed descent and to whose ranks they would be admitted after death, and they obeyed an inductive system of morality which, though lacking codified tenets, certainly tended to produce a high type of character and to nurture a happy faith in the possibilities of a future state. But the *hei-min* and the *sem-min*, the commoners and the serfs, what religion did they embrace? Some of them, especially the farmers and artisans, might consider that they belonged to the congregation of *Shinto* worshippers; but others were effectually excluded since they lacked the essential qualification of consanguinity with the deities. Looking at the sharp lines of caste cleavage that divided both *hei-min* and *sem-min* from the patrician class it is difficult to avoid the inference that all these commoners and serfs stood originally outside the pale of the



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invaders' creed. At any rate, if their places in the hierarchy of the hereafter were to be regulated by their stations in the society of the present, the life beyond the grave cannot have presented to them a very smiling aspect.

To a nation thus constituted Buddhism came in the second half of the sixth century. We shall not here pause to consider the manner of its coming or the story of its early struggles. Still less shall we attempt to analyse the original religion itself. Buddhism resembles that house of many mansions on which the hopes of so many and so many-minded sections of Christian humanity are fixed with equal assurance that each has found the truth. In its library of over two thousand sutras, one of which, translated into Chinese, is twenty-five times as large as the whole Christian Bible, every searcher after the great verity may find materials to construct a creed according to the pattern of his own intellectual and emotional nature, and none can confidently assert that upon him alone the light of inspiration has shone, for none dare pretend to imagine that his researches have been ex-



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haustive. It is here that we find the explanation of the tranquil tolerance amid which the various sects of Buddhism have been evolved. It is here, too, that we find a special interest in the faith, for by inviting eclecticism it becomes a mirror of its interpreter's mind. In each vessel of water drawn from the well where Buddhist truth lies so profoundly buried we see a reflection of the drawer's moral features, and it follows that if we could trace accurately the developments received by Buddhism and the changes it has undergone during the twelve hundred years of its active existence in Japan, we should find ourselves looking very closely at the genius of the Japanese people and at the guiding spirit of their civilisation. Such a task, if fully performed, would assume immense dimensions. Yet some of its most important results may be sketched without exhausting the reader's patience, as we hope to show in our next chapter.



## XI

### RELIGION AND RITES



WESTERN STUDENTS OF Buddhism are wont to say that the religion has for its basis the unreality of everything, and for its goal non-existence; that it regards man's life on earth as a link in a continuous chain of probations, to the length of which every sin adds something, so that salvation may not be reached until three immeasurable æons have lapsed.

Such is not the Buddhism of Japan. The creed, as first preached to the Japanese, was very simple. It prescribed five negative precepts and ten positive virtues, of which it is enough to say that were they practised to the letter, a high standard of morality would have been reached. The five negative precepts were, not to kill, not to be guilty of dishonesty, not to be lewd, not to speak untruths, not to drink intoxicants; the



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ten virtues were, to be kind to all sentient beings, to be liberal, to be chaste, to speak the truth, to employ gentle and peacemaking language, to use refined words, to express everything in a plain, unexaggerated manner, to devote the mind to moral thoughts, to practise charity and patience, and to cultivate pure intentions. These injunctions the disciple was asked to accept with unreasoning assurance. *Shinto*, as we have seen, furnished no code nor formulated any commandment. Buddhism pursued precisely the opposite plan. It issued a guiding canon of the utmost precision. But it refrained from any exposition of motives. Its method tallied exactly with that prescribed by teachers of the ideographic script which had then become the vehicle for transmitting all learning to Japan. Just as the student of the foreign symbols began by mastering their sounds and shapes and was afterwards inducted into their meanings, so an inquirer at the portals of Buddhism was first shown the letter of the law, and when he had learned how to obey, received an explanation of the principles underlying it. In the opening stage







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TEMPLE GATE, SHIBA PARK, TOKYO.







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of discipline, his own salvation constituted his sole motive of conduct; in the subsequent stage of enlightenment, he developed an ardent desire to save others also. But in both alike, salvation was separated from him by an interval which his individual exertions could not bridge. Is it not easy to conceive that the great majority of the new creed's disciples never passed beyond the first stage; and is it not easy also to see that to the plebeian and proletariat classes, banished beyond the range of *Shinto* instincts and the pale of its privileges, this arithmetically precise and comfortably explicit doctrine of the Buddha offered a welcome moral refuge?

But the difference between the ardent practicality of the Japanese mind and the dreamy patience of Oriental dispositions in general, quickly affected the reception accorded to the new creed. In its moral precepts there was nothing that could be called a revelation to the members of the patrician caste, nor did its immeasurably deferred hope constitute any attraction compared with their own prospect of certain admission after death to the ranks of the deities.



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Even the plebeian wanted something more tangible than a heaven from which he was separated by an eternity of effort. Thus Buddhism received its first Japanese modification. A sect<sup>1</sup> arose, preaching that beatitude meant knowledge of the "Lotus Law"; that the attainment of that knowledge insured immediate entry into Buddhahood, and that the ancient deities whom Japan worshipped were but manifestations of the Buddha. Such adaptations quickly won for Buddhism a strong title to popular regard. It ceased to be an alien creed and became a liberal expansion of the indigenous faith.<sup>2</sup> It secured to the patrician his old privileges while extending them to the plebeian.

But there remained in this new conception two deterrent elements. To reach the knowledge which opened the gate to salvation it was essential that the disciple should free himself from worldly concerns and influences; should stand aloof from workaday existence; should banish all

<sup>1</sup> The Tendai (heavenly command) sect, founded by Dengyo Daishi in 805 A. D., under Imperial auspices. It had its chief headquarters at the celebrated monastery of Hiei-zan.

<sup>2</sup> It was from this time that Shinto and Buddhism became commingled into the form of creed known as Ryobu-Shinto.



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sense of the beautiful and should become absorbed in meditating on absolute truth.<sup>1</sup> Such a programme repelled the average Japanese. He found it admirable to worship the Buddha of "infinite light and life," and comfortable to think that the state of blessedness might be attained by the work of a single life-span. He readily adjusted his feet to the first three steps of progress,—obedience to the precepts of morality, regulation of food and clothing and the choice of a suitable house,—but when he came to the fourth, when he had to accept the necessity of turning his back on the busy world and harmonising his faculties for a meditative career, the demand overtaxed his docility. Besides, the "Lotus Law" dealt in mysteries beyond comprehension. Its teachings lapsed into a vagueness, its doctrines extended to a comprehensiveness, that bewildered common intelligence. Soon a new system was elaborated. The omnipresent spirit of truth became the centre of the "diamond

<sup>1</sup> Fate, with its proverbial irony, decreed that the monastery where this unworldly and meditative sect had its headquarters should have a history resonant with the clash of arms. The monks of Hiei-zan became, from an early date, a community of soldiers.



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world" of noumena and the source of organic life in the world of phenomena. To reach to the realisation of the truth two ladders were revealed, an intellectual and a moral, two canons, each of ten precepts, easy to comprehend and not deterrently difficult to practise. At the head of all virtues stood a charity to which the Christian apostle's celebrated definition might aptly have been applied. The scope of this pre-eminent virtue was described with minutely practical accuracy. It included the digging of wells, the building of bridges, the making of roads, the maintenance of one's parents, the support of the church, the nursing of the sick, the succouring of the poor and the duty of recommending these same acts to others. There were further noble precepts and there was also an elaborate system of daily worship and prayer. All idea of abstention from the affairs of every-day life disappeared, and the hereafter became, not a state of absolute non-existence (*nirvana*), but the "infinite perception of a beatific vision"; a condition in which each of the saved formed one of a band of "great intercessors, pleading continually for





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the origin of evil, and the source of organic life, and the origin of phenomena. To reach to the truth, two ladders were revealed, one a word, and a word, two canons, each of which was easy to comprehend and not difficult to practise. At the head of all was a duty to which the Christian religion could find definition might aptly have been applied. The scope of this pre-eminent vision was described with minutely practical accuracy. It included the digging of wells, the building of bridges, the making of roads, the education of one's parents, the support of the church, the nursing of the sick, the succoring of the poor and the duty of recommending these same acts to others. There were further noble precepts and there was also an elaborate system of daily worship and prayer. All idea of abstention from the affairs of every-day life disappeared, and the hereafter became, not a state of absolute non-existence (*annihilation*), but the "infinite perfection of a beatific vision"; a condition in which each of the saved formed one of a band of glorified benefactors, pleading continually for





**BUDDHIST PRIESTS.**







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their ignorant and struggling brethren upon earth that they might 'attain to the same heights of perfect enlightenment and bliss.'"<sup>1</sup>

This is the *Shingon* sect, the sect of the "True Word," the sect of the *Logos*, founded in 816 A. D. by one of the greatest of Japanese religious teachers, Kobo Daishi. So far as it has been here set down, its outlines might easily be adapted to a partial picture of Christianity. There is a great presiding spirit; there is an ethical system that the followers of the Nazarene might indorse; there is a band of interceding saints in heaven; there is an eternity of happiness; there is an everlasting law of retribution, every infraction of the moral code entailing a commensurate penalty; there are incarnations of the Supreme Being—not one incarnation, indeed, but several—whose mission is to lead men to the knowledge of the truth. But if such affinities with Christianity exist, so also do differences. There is a belief in previous existences and in their unknown sins, by which

<sup>1</sup> Lloyd's "Developments of Japanese Buddhism," a work of high value to students of this subject.



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the devotee is kept entangled in the cycle of life and death ; there is prayer to the gods of the country, the *Shinto* deities ; and there is worship of ancestors, in a modified form, indeed, but still worship.

With this development of Buddhism the Japanese may be said to have remained content for three hundred and sixty years. Then, in the presence of perpetual wars, spoliations and miseries, the creed took another shape, a shape that reflected the conditions of the time. Salvation by faith was preached. The world had fallen upon such evil days that a cry of despair went up to Amida, the Buddha of endless life and light. Men were taught that works could not avail, and that in blind trust, aided by the repetition of ceaseless formulæ, lay the only hope of salvation. Such was the doctrine of the sect of the Pure Land (*Jodo*), founded by Homen Shonin (1174 A. D.). It attracted numerous disciples. The comforting tenet, that by simple trust in Amida during life, admittance to his paradise might be secured after death, perfectly suited the dejected mood of the age, and would,



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indeed, suit the mood of men in all ages antecedent to the millennium.<sup>1</sup>

Fifty years later another sect was born, a child of the "Pure Land," namely, the Spirit sect.<sup>2</sup> The latter did not supplant the former, but rather supplemented it. In this new system love was added to trust. Grateful remembrance of the mercies of Amida and faith in his willingness and power to save, now sufficed to secure salvation and to keep the devotee's feet in the true path. There were other differences also. The disciple learned, not that Amida waited until the hour of a man's death to conduct him to paradise, but that the coming of the saviour was present and immediate; that he took up his abode at once, even during life, in the heart of the saved. The doctrine essential to all forms of Buddhism remained, — the doctrine that misfortune in this world had its root in some evil wrought in a previous state

<sup>1</sup> This sect received much patronage from the Imperial Court, as well as from the Tokugawa Shoguns. The great temple, Zōjō-ji, which stands among the Tokugawa mausolea in Shiba, belongs to the *Jodo-shu* (*shu* = sect).

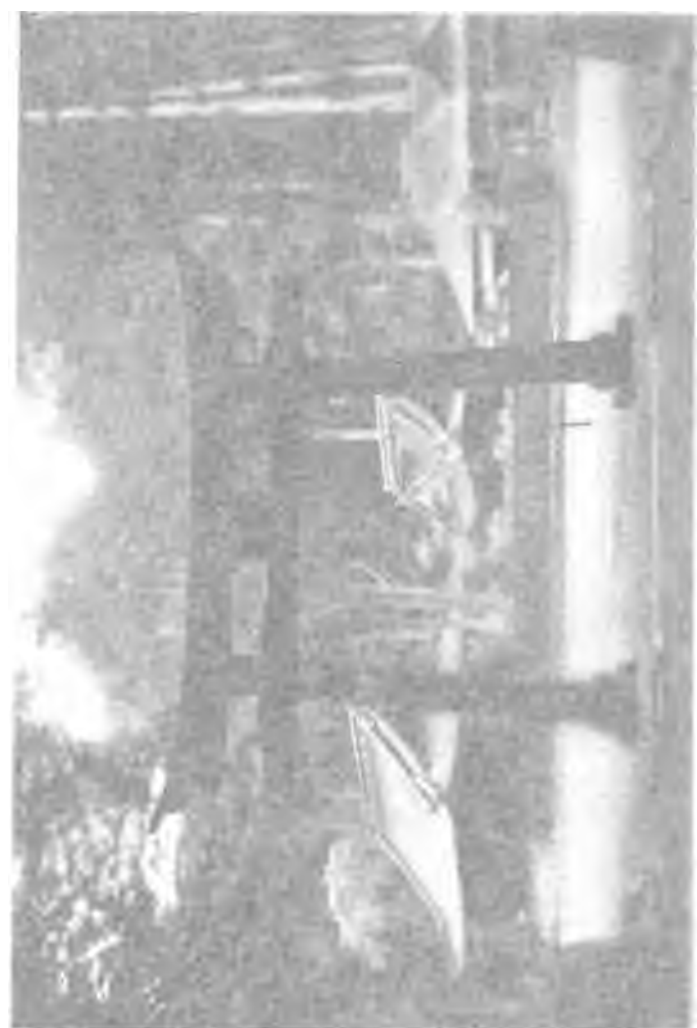
<sup>2</sup> *Shin-shu*, called also *Monto-shu* (sect of gate disciples), and *Ikko-shu* (undivided sect), founded by Shinran in 1224 A. D.



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of existence, — but it received the adjunct that neither Amida nor any other Buddha might be invoked to interrupt the natural sequence of cause and effect, and, as a logical corollary, amulets, spells and all such aids were interdicted. The devotee was no longer invited to become a priest, to abandon his home and embrace celibacy. All in every rank and of every calling were entitled to entertain an equal hope of salvation. The priests themselves ceased to observe some of the vetoes that chiefly distinguished them from laymen. They married, ate meat, and, if desirable, replaced the stole by the surcoat. They learned in the domestic circle those sympathies and appreciations that a celibate can never develop. This “Spirit sect” is the largest in Japan. With its parent, the “Pure Land sect,” it possesses more than one third of all the temples in the country. It is full of vitality. Its doctrines as to the origin of the world, the sphere of providential functions, original sin, the efficacy of prayer, the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body, do not so greatly shock ordinary intelli-







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FUTU-ARA TEMPLE, NIKKO.







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gence, or make such large demands on unreasoning credulity, as do the corresponding tenets preached from Western pulpits.

We now come to the last sect that need be noticed here—a sect that has attracted considerable observation among Occidental students of Japanese Buddhism. It is the sect of the “Flower of the Law” (*Hokke-shu*), founded (1253 A. D.) by Nichiren (the Lotus of Light), one of the noblest and most picturesque figures among Japanese “saints.” The essential difference between the creed of Nichiren and the creeds of all his predecessors is that he preached a god, the prime and only great cause. They showed to their disciples a chain of cause and effect, but had nothing to say about its origin; he taught that the first link in the chain was the Buddha of original enlightenment, of whom all subsequent Buddhas, Sakyamuni and the rest, were only transient reflections. Nichiren thus reached the Christian conception of a god in whom everything lives, moves and has its being; an omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient deity. All phenomena, mental and material, in all time



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and space, were declared by him to have only subjective existence in the consciousness of the individual. The differences and distinctions observed by the ordinary man were imaginary and misleading ; had no foundation in fact. In the eyes of the Buddha there was identity where the vulgar saw variety. To know the underlying sameness of all things, to understand the oneness of the perceiver and the perceived,—that was true wisdom. It followed that this world, so full of evils to mortal vision, did not differ from paradise in the Buddha's sight. To the enlightened all worlds were equally beautiful. "Hence, to proclaim the identity of this evil or phenomenal world with the glorious underlying reality, or noumenon ; to point out the way to Buddhahood ; to open the path of salvation ; above all, to convince the people that one and all of them might become Buddhas, here and now,—that was the mission of the sect of Nichiren."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the colours that Buddhism took in its

<sup>1</sup> "The Doctrines of Nichiren" ; compiled by the Right Virtuous Abbot Kobayashi ; translated by Messrs. K. Tatsumi and F. H. Balfour.



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transmission through the Japanese mind were all bright hues. Death ceased to be a passage to mere non-existence and became the entrance to actual beatitude. The ascetic selfishness of the contemplative disciple was exchanged for a career of active charity. The endless chain of cause and effect was shortened to a single link. The conception of one supreme all-merciful being forced itself into prominence. The gulf of social and political distinctions that yawned so widely between the patrician and the plebeian, separating them by a chasm which seemed well-nigh impassable, and all the other unsightlinesses of the world, became subjective *eidola* destined to disappear at the first touch of moral light. The Buddha and the people were identified.

Turning now to the daily life of the individual we find that it was never overshadowed by his religion. Confession of sins, repentance in sackcloth and ashes, solemn and protracted acts of worship, the terrors of an eternity of torture,—these things entered scarcely at all into the layman's existence. The temple presented itself to him as a place where the mortuary tablets of



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his ancestors were guarded ; a place to be visited for the burning of incense at tombs and their adornment with flowers on anniversaries of the deaths of near relatives ; a place for the occasional deposit of small coins in an arms chest ; a place for offering up brief prayer when everyday affairs seemed in need of the Buddha's divine influence ; a place where the ashes of the worshipper himself would in the end be laid to rest, and whither his own friends and relatives would come to honour his memory when he too should have received from the priests one of those beautiful and benevolent posthumous titles which they knew so well how to choose. It was all essentially practical and easy-going. If a man needed moral guidance, he went to the temple and listened to a sermon. On set days, sometimes every day, one of the priests preached. He sat before a small lectern on a dais raised a little above the wide area of the matted nave and talked to the people sitting around him on the floor. His sermon was generally of the simplest. It dealt with the affairs of common life ; with the small cares of *Osandon*, the maid of all



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work; with the troubles of *Detchi*, the shop boy; with the woes of *O-yuki*, the danseuse, and with the perplexities of *Tarobei*, the rustic. Great ceremonies of worship might also be attended, but with these the ordinary individual had no intellectual sympathy. They were to him merely spectacular effects, solemn, splendid and impressive, but incomprehensible. If the devout watched them with awed mien, the little belles of the parish were guilty of no irreverence when they pattered up the steps leading to the lofty hall of worship, peeped in smilingly at the tonsured chanters of litanies and reciters of *sutras*, and pattered away again with just such faces of sunny unconcern as they might have worn on their way home from a dancing lesson.

Buddhism, Japanese Buddhism, can never produce a Puritan or a Covenanter. It weaves no threads of solemnity or sanctimoniousness into the pattern of every-day life. Its worlds of hungry demons and infernal beings are too unsubstantial, too remote, to throw any lurid glare over the present. The festival, indeed, may be



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called the popular form of worship in Japan, such a festival as can be seen in October at the Ikegami temple near Tokyo on the anniversary of Nichiren, whose doctrine of the Flower of the Law has been outlined above. It is a species of gala for the huge multitude—numbering some two hundred thousand—that throngs thither during the two days of the *fête*. If the tiny band of devout folks that listen to the sermon be compared with the gay crowds that roam about the beautiful woods, enjoy the enchanting landscapes and seascapes presenting themselves on every side, and frequent the various entertainments provided for their diversion by itinerant showmen, the ratio of holiness to holiday becomes very suggestive. It may be difficult for the reader to imagine the precincts of a Christian cathedral on a saint's day occupied by acrobats, jugglers, travelling menageries, performing dogs and such frivolities, while the business of prayer and preaching proceeds vigorously within the walls of the building. Yet such a conception is only partial; it must be supplemented by another strange feature, namely, that the temple



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building stands open throughout the whole of one side, so that the people who happen to be praying within are virtually a part of the audience enjoying the penny shows without. Here, as everywhere in Japan, the practical sincerity of the national character shows itself. Even at a religious festival no effort to dissimulate the traits of which humanity can never divest itself is encouraged or expected. The great majority of the people come for the sake of the outing as much as to pay respect to the memory of the saint. Let them, then, enjoy themselves. Religion does not prescribe austerity of manners or asceticism of life. The Buddhas are not shocked because a monkey turns somersaults under the eaves of their sanctuaries, or a rope-dancer balances in the shadow of their shrines. In this very rope-dancer, too, the observer may see another instance of the spirit of sincerity that presides at the festival. In Europe a female gymnast dresses in flesh-coloured tights and seeks to place her womanhood in suggestive evidence. The Japanese girl at the Ikegami *fête* has no such fancy. Her business is rope-dancing, not



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meretricious posing. The latter may be very well in its way, but has nothing to do with poisoning one's body on some strands of plaited hemp. Therefore the Ikegami girl who undertakes to exhibit skill in the science of equilibrium wears garments which, while they are excellently suited to the purposes of her performance, are even better qualified to divert attention from the sex of the performer. There, too, in another part of the spacious grounds, a party of priests may be seen watching the manœuvres of some highly trained birds. Why not? They are jaunty, saucy little chaffinches as ever exhibited themselves in public; and to see them skip out of their cages, bow to their trainer and to the audience, ring bells, count coins, pound rice and do the woodpecker business against every convenient post, is to conceive a new respect for bird intelligence. So the praying goes on, and the rattling of *cash* against the bars of the money chest, and the burning of incense, and the chattering of monkeys, and the shouting of showmen, and the perpetual rippling of laughter, and the babble of cheery talk as the





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and the *kyōgen*. The latter may be very well a *kyōgen*, but has nothing to do with *kyōgen* as solely on the strands of plaited rope. The *kyōgen* is the one girl who undertakes the part of the clown in the science of equilibrium, and performs acrobatic stunts which, while they are certainly useful to the purposes of her performance, are even better qualified to divert attention from the sex of the performer. There, too, on a clear part of the spacious grounds, a flock of priests may be seen watching the manoeuvres of some highly trained birds. What? They are janty, saucy little chaffinches as ever exhibited themselves in public; and to see them skip out of their cages, bow to their master and to the audience, ring bells, count the number of grains of rice and do the woodpecker business first every convenient post, is to conceive a new respect for bird intelligence. So the prattle of the *kyōgen*, and the rattling of *ca h* against the side of the money chest, and the burning of incense, and the chattering of monkeys, and the shouting of showmen, and the perpetual rippling of the *kyōgen*, and the babble of cheery talk as the





A "NO" DANCER IN COSTUME.







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great good-humoured multitude flows to and fro, not a bit nearer to hell or farther from heaven because its units have studied no hypocritical mien of sanctimoniousness, or been trained to deceive their deity by putting a veneer of puritanism over the instincts which he has implanted in their breasts.

But in such a crowd what proportion does the literate element bear to the illiterate, the patrician to the plebeian? And if the philosopher is there as well as the bumpkin, the savant as well as the servant, how much of pastime is the motive of each and how much of worship? That is a great question. It amounts to asking what has been the influence of Buddhism upon the educated classes in Japan. Undoubtedly that influence was once very powerful. Undoubtedly the religion possessed at the time of its advent, numerous features strongly attractive. It brought in its company a noble literature; a literature pregnant with philosophic thought presented to the mind in attractive guise; a literature embodying everything that was profound and beautiful in Oriental speculation. It built for



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itself temples the grandeur of whose architectural proportions and the gorgeousness of whose decoration surpassed Japanese conception. Its priests manifested a spirit of activity, benevolence and self-denial that could not but impress a nation entirely strange to the spectacle of religious zeal. It found a people devoting themselves to the study of Chinese literature with all the fervour that marks their descendants' excursions into the domain of Western learning, and it presented to them a library of books within whose ideographic pages was enshrined a mine of speculative thought, a mass of obscure, intricate, subtle metaphysical suggestions that derived a semblance of profundity from their very strangeness, of magnificence from the ignorance of their students. The minute mechanism of the new system constituted an additional attraction. It carried men from the simplest and vaguest of creeds to the most complex and definite; from a faith without ethical code or canons of dogma to a faith extraordinarily rich in both. If there is, as we know there is, a tendency in the human mind to pass from one extreme to another, it is easy



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to understand how gladly the feet of many turned from wandering in the trackless deserts of *Shinto* to march in the beaten paths and along the carefully graded highways of Buddhism. Further, the monasteries were the chief seats of learning. Proficiency in Buddhism was synonymous with proficiency in the Chinese language, with possession of the key to all the stores of the Middle Kingdom's learning. Yet, when we come to ask whether from this array of secular and religious arguments the conclusion may be derived that the supernatural phases of Buddhism impressed themselves upon the hearts of the educated classes, the answer must be negative. It is hard, indeed, to imagine a total lack of that kind of faith among men who, in mediæval times, contributed vast sums to support or endow temples, made them the depositories of their ancestral tablets, and repaired thither at set seasons to hear orisons chanted, *sutras* read, and sermons preached. But still more difficult is it to conceive that, had the transcendental doctrines of Buddhism sunk deep into the national mind, some evidence of the fact would not have been



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furnished in the growth of a philosophical literature, the product of lay pens. There is practically no such literature. On the contrary, there are plain indications that the supernatural beliefs of Buddhist teachers gradually became the object of open or covert ridicule among the learned, and were ultimately relegated to much the same place in the minds of educated men as ghost stories occupy in European or American thought to-day. In short, religion as distinguished from morality, came to be quietly ignored. Nothing survived beyond an instinctive belief in the immortality of the soul and a traditional faith in a future world peopled by the shades of parents and relatives loved in life and revered after death. Much of the vogue so speedily attained and so steadily retained by Confucianism is doubtless due to the subordinate place assigned to supernatural religion in that system. Confucianism, too, owing to the note of feudalism that sounds through its philosophy, has been found to be more or less out of harmony with the spirit of Occidental civilisation, and is destined, in its turn, to pass into the oblivion



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where so many Oriental systems lie buried. But through fourteen centuries it worked steadily and powerfully to turn the mind of educated Japan from transcendental subtleties and religious mysticism to a conviction that the only true and rational creed is one which subjects the human faculties to no excessive strain, nor asks men to accept, on the alleged authority of supernatural revelation, propositions lying wholly beyond the range of mortal intelligence. Buddhism, in the bright and comfortable garments with which Japanese genius clothed it, is the faith of the masses, but the scholar proposes to himself a simpler creed, an essentially workaday system of ethics. To be moral, honest and upright ; to be guided by reason and not by passion ; to be faithful to friends and benefactors ; to abstain from meanness and selfishness in all forms ; to be prepared to sacrifice everything to country and king, — that is the ideal of the cultured mind, and in the pursuit of it no priestly guidance is considered necessary. If a Japanese be asked to define the much-talked-of *Yamato-damashii*, — the spirit of Yamato, — he will do so in the words set down here.



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As to the masses, the farmer, the artisan, the shopkeeper and the proletariat, when we say that Buddhism is their creed, the reader will be prepared to hear, from what has been written above, that at sacred service as well as at festival time they do not take their faith very seriously. A visitor to the temple on the day of the *sekkyo*, the day of the sermon, which has been duly advertised on a species of signboard at the entrance of the enclosure, cannot fail to note that nine tenths of the congregation are white-haired, the remainder consisting of children with a sparse admixture of adults. *Tarobei* may be there, driven by the dread that some unsettled account stands between him and the heaven which ought to have averted the typhoon from his rice field or the insect plague from his mulberry plantation; and little *O-setsu* may be there, who, last evening, sat beside her brazier, her dimples banished and her sweet head bowed as she mused over the indissoluble chain of causation that had linked her to love troubles and a throbbing heart. But these are the exceptions. Generally the worshipper carries with



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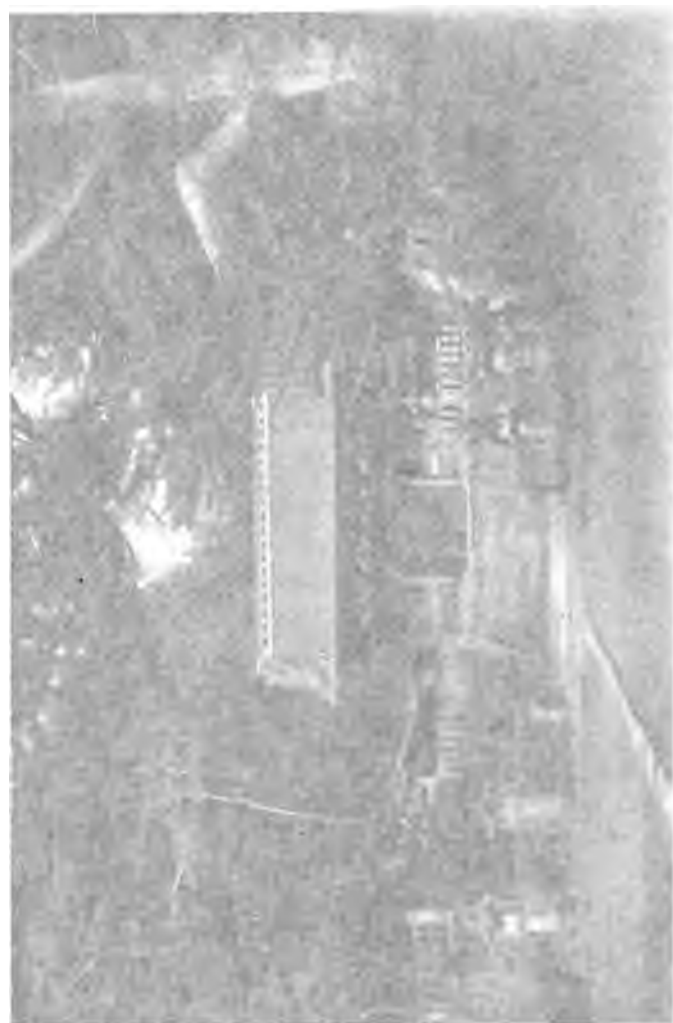
him wrinkles and snowy locks, and a hope that since the affairs of the "fleeting world" have become to him as "dust before the wind," he may by pious practices acquire a vested interest in the affairs of the world to come. He can follow the sermon. It is plain, simple, adapted to the lowest order of intelligence, the even flow of its gentle precepts unimpeded by any rocks of erudition nor deepening to any profundities of transcendental philosophy. The old folks listen with comfortable reverence, and at each pause in the preacher's eloquence—eloquence sometimes of the highest order—bow their heads, roll their rosaries between their palms, devoutly murmur *Namu Amida-ton*, or whatever formula the sect prescribes, and then throw into the alms chest an offering of *cash*. The parabled mite of the widow was a farthing. The *cash* of Japan is the fortieth part of a penny, and a worshipper who launches four of these liliputian coins into the great chest has done his duty nobly. No one talks of these copper tokens as *saisen*. They are *o-saisen*. The honorific prefix belongs to them just as fully as



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it does to the lordly vases of silver and gold lotus that flank the altar; to the resplendent altar itself with its broad face of rosy lacquer, its richly chased and heavily gilded mountings, its furniture of fine bronze and ancient *céladon*; or to the magnificent shrine that glows with mellowed splendour in the sacred obscurity of the chancel. But beyond the sermon, beyond the throwing of *o-saisen* and the rolling of beads, what does the worshipper understand? Nothing. The *sutra* is there—the lotus law, engrossed in exquisite ideographs upon an illuminated scroll. But its texts are unintelligible. To the average Japanese they convey as little as a verse from the original Koran would convey to a cowboy. They are part of the magnificent unknown. The priest is the repository of whatever blessed knowledge they embody, the transmitter of their divine message to mankind. And the priest himself understands how to lend spectacular effect to that part of his office. When he seats himself among his congregation to preach, he wears the simplest of robes, a white or sober-hued cassock and a black stole. But







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it does to the lordly vases of silver and gold, to the lotus that flank the altar; to the resplendent altar itself with its broad face of rosy lacquer, its richly chased and heavily gilded mountings, its furniture of fine bronze and ancient *ebudon*; or to the magnificent shrine that glows with mellowed splendour in the sacred obscurity of the chapel. But beyond the sermon, beyond the throwing of *o-saisen* and the rolling of beads, what does the worshipper understand? Nothing. The *sutra* is there—the lotus law, engrossed in exquisite ideographs upon an illuminated scroll. For its texts are unintelligible. To the average Japanese they convey as little as a verse from the original Koran would convey to a cowboy. They are part of the magnificent unknown. The priest is the repository of whatever blessed knowledge they embody, the transmitter of their divine message to mankind. And the priest himself understands how to lend specific effect to that part of his office. When he seats himself among his congregation to preach, he wears the simplest of robes, a white *senryu*-lined cassock and a black stole. But





NIŌMON IVEMITSU TEMPLE AT NIKKO.







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when he opens the *sutra* or recites the litany, his vestments are of brocade that would serve worthily to drape a throne, and might well betray the female units of his congregation into the sin of "lust of the eye" were not the precaution adopted of cutting the splendid fabric into a multitude of fragments before fashioning it into stole or cassock. Patchwork quilts are not used in Japan, and a girdle checkered with seams after the fashion of a chessboard would be a shocking solecism. So the housewife and the belle are enabled to admire these grand brocades without coveting them.

The religious service is strikingly different from the sermon: the latter, a practical, plainly phrased adaptation of saving ethics to every-day affairs; the former, a mysterious, impressive and enigmatical display, as far removed from mundane affinities as is the lotus throne itself. At one of the great temples, in a hall of worship fifty feet high, four times as many long and three times as many broad, these services may be seen by all comers. The huge hall is absolutely without decoration, except in one spot



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where stand the shrine and the altar, a mass of glowing gold and rich colours, mellowed by wide spaces on either side to which the daylight scarcely penetrates. Within a circular enclosure at the outer end of the nave sit a band of acolytes chanting to an accompaniment of wooden timbrels. Their voices are pitched in octaves, and the number of chanters is varied from time to time so as to break the monotony of the cadence. When this has continued for some moments, nine priests, richly robed, emerge slowly and solemnly from the back of the chancel and kneel before an equal number of lecterns ranged in line on the left of the altar. Each priest carries a chaplet of beads, and on each lectern is a missal. Then the chant of the acolyte ceases, and the priest kneeling in the middle of the line opens the *sutra* and reads aloud. One by one his companions follow his example, until the nine voices blend in a monotone, which, in turn, is varied by the same device as that previously adopted by the acolytes. After an interval, another similar band pace gravely down the chancel, and kneeling on the



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right of the altar, opposite the first comers, add their voices in the same cumulative fashion to the varying volume of sound. Finally, the chief priest himself emerges, attended by an acolyte, and kneels, facing the altar, at a large lectern placed between the two rows of *sutra*-readers. He confines himself at first to burning incense, and, as the fumes ascend denser and denser, the intonation of the reading priests grows more and more accelerated, until at last their words pour forth with bewildering volubility. Then suddenly this peal of resonance dies away to a scarcely audible murmur, and while its echoes are still trembling in the air they are joined by the voice of the chief priest, which by degrees absorbs them into its swelling note and then itself faints to a whisper, taken up in turn and swelled to a rolling chant by the tones of the *sutra*-readers. These alternations of intoning constitute virtually the whole ceremony. It is grave, awe-inspiring and massive in its simplicity. It captivates the senses by degrees, and lifts them at last to an ecstasy where reason ceases to discern that the components of the grand ceremony are nothing



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more than deftly interwoven fragments of a chanted litany, gorgeous vestments, a heart of glowing gold and soft colours in a vast sepulchre of shadow, and an edifice of noble proportions. But that analytical consciousness certainly comes to the average layman sooner or later. That he has reached it is plainly shown by his mien. The sketchy act of worship that he uses as a passport to such ceremonials bears as little proportion to their magnificence as does the fee paid at the door of a theatre to the tumultuous moods of mirth or sadness produced by the spectacle within. Nothing in which the mechanical element predominates can be permanently interesting. The Buddhist services appeal only to a narrow range of emotions and leave the intellect untouched. The adult Japanese takes little interest in them. To be a frequent temple-goer out of season, that is to say, on occasions other than those dictated by reverence to the memory of a deceased relative or friend, is to be regarded by one's neighbours as uncanny, unpractical and probably unfortunate.

The priest himself contributes nothing, either by intellectual culture or a life of conspicuous



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zeal and virtue, to raise his religion to a place in the people's hearts. He used to be the nation's schoolmaster as well as its scholar. The State has stepped in and relieved him of the former function; the latter title he has long lost. The example he sets is one of indolence. Now and then, in the perfunctory routine of colourless duty, he has to intone a litany that has been ringing in his ears since childhood, and always his figure looms on the horizon of the layman's life when incense has to be burned and prayer said for the soul of the departed. But for the rest he is without occupation. He is not to be found waiting with words of comfort at the bedside of the dying, or with hands of helpfulness in the hovels of the poor. Once only, at the great *Bon* festival, when the spirits of the dead revisit the homes of the living, the priest finds himself busied with ministrations. But it is an interval of only four days, and the work is lightened by its large reward, for during that brief space the major part of the year's income is collected.

The advent of Christianity has galvanised Buddhism into new life. The Western mission-



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ary came to uproot the lotus plant. His attack has resulted in making the sap circulate once more through its withered limbs. There is a sort of Buddhist revival. Schools have been established by each sect for the education of its priests; propagandists are sent out, periodicals are published. Buddhism is not dead. It is not even moribund. In the spring of 1895, the disciples of the *Monto* sect assembled in Kyoto to open a temple on the construction of which eight million *yen* had been spent, and in the transport of whose huge timbers cables made of women's hair had been used. Hundreds of thousands of believers had contributed money and material for the building; hundreds of thousands of women and girls had shorn off their tresses to weave these ropes. There is abundant life in the faith still.

This seems the proper place to say a word about the relations between Church and State in Japan. Up to the beginning of the ninth century *Shinto* had no rival in official patronage; it was virtually the sole religion of Court and country alike. A special department (*Jingi-kan*) of *Shinto* ceremonies



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managed all matters connected with worship and stood at the head of all public offices. From the establishment of the capital at Kyoto, however, the influence of Buddhism began to be felt, not in open opposition, but rather as an overshadowing and absorbing system which, by appropriating the chief traditional features of its rival, gradually deprived the latter of individuality and therefore of power. Still the imported faith remained long without State recognition. Its priesthood, though growing in wealth and numbers and practically autocratic within the domain of religious affairs, enjoyed no official exemptions or privileges. Their hierarchs were appointed without reference to the secular authorities and were not included in the roll of official grades. Under the Tokugawa government a change took place. Following the example of their great predecessor, Ieyasu, the *Shoguns* ruling in Edo spared no pains to cement their relations with Buddhism by extending to it ample patronage and support. Yet, even while striking monuments of that munificence grew up in the splendid temples at Shiba, Uyeno and Nikko, the political status of the creed might



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have remained unaltered had not the event of Christianity and the government's crusade against it led the third *Shogun*, Iyemitsu, to conceive the necessity of establishing a certain measure of State control over religious affairs. It was not an extensive control. The priesthood retained competence to elect their hierarchs, enforce their canons, and manage the details of their ecclesiastical organisations. But there was added to the body politic a new class of officials called *Jisha-bugyo*, whose duty was to administer the secular laws in all matters relating to religion and who were chosen from among the most influential nobles in the empire. The Church, in short, was removed beyond the pale of the ordinary tribunals and brought under the purview of the highest powers in the State. A hundred years later, that is to say, during the first half of the eighteenth century, there sprung up a remarkable scholastic movement which aimed at re-popularising the ancient traditions of the indigenous faith and denouncing the tenets of Buddhism and Confucianism alike. It has yet to be determined how closely that movement





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But the emperor's edicts had not the effect of removing the government's outside agent, the *Sugawara* *Iyemitsu*, to confine the country to establishing a certain measure of State control over religious affairs. It was not until the Meiji period that the priestly control was removed. The priesthood retained considerable control, but the *Kennichis*, enforce their control over the details of their ecclesiastical and religious actions. But there was added to the body of the new class of officials called *daijichu*, whose duty was to administer the laws in all matters relating to religion and who were chosen from among the most influential nobles in the empire. The Church, in short, was removed beyond the pale of the ordinary tribunals and brought under the purview of the highest powers in the State. A hundred years later, that is to say, during the last half of the eighteenth century, there sprang up a remarkable scholastic movement which aimed at re-popularising the ancient traditions of the religion as faith and domesticating the tenets of Buddhism and Confucianism alike. It has not yet been determined how closely that movement





STONE STEPS AT NIKKO.







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was connected with the impulse which culminated in the political revolution of 1867. We may assert, at all events, that it revived the doctrine of the divinity of the throne and that the Restoration of 1867 depended on that doctrine. Naturally, therefore, the government of the Restoration identified itself with the revival inaugurated by the great scholars Mabuchi, Motoori and Hirata a hundred years previously. The *Jisha-bugyo*, whose authority had extended to *Shinto* and Buddhism alike, were abolished and in their stead was established the *Jingi-sho*, an office which ranked above all the State departments and was practically a resuscitation of the *Jingi-kan* spoken of above. It is not to be doubted that the aim of the more radical reformers of the time was the ultimate suppression of Buddhism and the elevation of *Shinto* to the rank of the State Church. For whereas the affairs of *Shinto* received direct superintendence from the new office, those of Buddhism ceased to be recognised by officialdom; the Buddhist temples were stripped of the greater part of their large estates, and since they necessarily lost at



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the same time the munificent patronage that had been extended to them by the feudal nobles, a season of decadence and impoverishment overtook them. But Buddhism had twined its roots too strongly around the hearts of the people to be overthrown by an official storm. Steadily it reasserted its influence, until, in 1872, the *Jingi-sho* was replaced by the *Kyobu-sho*, an office ranking lower than its predecessor but still very high in the administrative organisation. From this office the priests of the two religions received equal recognition and the same official title (*Kyodo-shoku*). Thenceforth the government's purpose of identifying the interests of Church and State gradually ceased to have practical force, until (in 1884) the ranks and titles of the priests were abolished, the various sects were declared perfectly free to choose their own superintendents and manage their own affairs, and in the administrative organisation there remained only an insignificant Bureau of Shrines and Temples (*Shaji-kyoku*) to deal with questions from which the secular authority could not prudently dissociate itself. The last tie that bound



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the Church to the State was severed by the promulgation of the Constitution in 1889, the 27th article of which declares that, "within limits not prejudicial to peace and order and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, Japanese subjects shall enjoy freedom of religious belief."

*Shinto*, however, remains the unique creed of the Imperial house. Appended to the Constitution by which freedom of conscience was so unequivocally granted to the people, were three documents, a preamble, an Imperial oath in the sanctuary of the palace, and an Imperial speech, every one of which contained words that left no doubt of the sovereign's rigid adherence to the patriarchal faith of Japan. In the preamble His Majesty said: "Having, by virtue of the glories of our ancestors, ascended the throne of a lineal succession unbroken for ages eternal; desiring to promote the welfare and to give development to the moral and intellectual faculties of our subjects who have been favoured with the benevolent care and affectionate vigilance of our ancestors, and hoping to maintain the prosperity of the State in concert with our people and with



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their support, we hereby promulgate, etc. ;” in the Imperial oath he said : “ We, the successor to the prosperous throne of our predecessors, do humbly and solemnly swear to the Imperial founder of our house and to our Imperial ancestors that, in consonance with a great policy coextensive with the heavens and with the earth, we shall maintain and secure from decline the ancient form of government. . . . These laws [the Constitution] come to only an exposition of grand precepts for the conduct of the government, bequeathed by the Imperial founder of our house and by our other Imperial ancestors. That we have been so fortunate in our reign, in accordance with the tendency of the times, as to accomplish this work, we owe to the glorious spirits of the Imperial founder of our house and of our other Imperial ancestors ;” and in the Imperial speech he says : “ The Imperial founder of our house and our other Imperial ancestors, by the help and support of the forefathers of our subjects, laid the foundation of our empire upon a basis which is to last forever. That this brilliant achievement embellishes the annals of our



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country, is due to the glorious virtues of our sacred Imperial ancestors and to the loyalty and bravery of our subjects, their love of country and their public spirit." There is no ambiguity here, nor, indeed, any feebleness of language. The Mikado, looking back to the immortals as his progenitors, and persuaded that his dynasty and empire have their protection and the protection of the successive Mikados now enrolled in their ranks, believes that the past twenty-six centuries of his house's rule and his realm's integrity are an earnest of unbroken continuity awaiting both in the future. Folks in the Occident who listen with the calm born of long custom while their monarchs proclaim themselves king or emperor "by the grace of God," and who join to the echoes of their triumphal pæans a prayer for the abiding countenance of the "Lord of hosts," can scarcely claim an unqualified title to criticise the more comprehensive, though not more robust, faith of the Emperor of Japan.

The various religious ceremonials observed at Court are all on the strict lines of orthodox *Shinto*. On the first day of the first month, the



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*Shiho-hai* (four-quarter adoration) is celebrated. The Emperor worships the Sun Goddess, whose shrine is at Ise, as well as the Celestial and Terrestrial Deities, and makes offerings before the Imperial cenotaphs, praying for the happiness of his people and the peace of his reign. On the third of the same month, the Imperial ancestors and the deities of heaven and earth are again worshipped, and petitions, now more particularly connected with the tranquillity and prosperity of the reign, are addressed to these supernatural guardians, in a ceremonial called the *Genshi-sai* (festival of the beginning). On the eleventh of the second month the *Kigen-setsu* (memorial of the origin) is held, to commemorate the ascension of the first mortal Emperor, Jimmu. On the seventeenth of the tenth month, the first rice of the year and *saké* brewed from it are offered to the Sun Goddess, the ceremony being called *Kanname* (divine tasting). On the twenty-third of the eleventh month, a similar rite, the *Nüname* (new tasting) is performed, the difference being that the first fruits are now offered to all the deities. The birthday of the



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Emperor himself is also celebrated and four solemn mourning services are performed, one on the anniversary of the death of the late Emperor, Kōmei (80th January); the second on that of the death of the first Emperor, Jimmu (8d April); the third and fourth in memory of all the Imperial ancestors. These last two are called *Shunki-korei-sai* (worship of the Imperial spirits at the vernal equinox) and *Shuki-korei-sai* (worship of the Imperial spirits at the autumnal equinox), and take place on the spring and autumn equinoctial days, respectively.

No material differences distinguish the routine of these ceremonials: to know one is to know all. Within the palace there is a large hall, the *Kashiko-dokoro*, or place of reverence, constructed of milk-white, knotless timbers, exquisitely joined and smooth as mirrors but absolutely devoid of decoration. At one end stands a large shrine, also of snow-pure wood, with delicately chased mountings of silver gilt. It encloses models of the divine insignia and a number of long, narrow tablets of pine, on which are inscribed the posthumous titles of all the Emperors since the days



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of *Jimmu*. The floor is covered with rice-straw mats having borders of white damask, and within the folding doors of the shrine hangs a curtain woven out of bamboo threads. At the appointed hour, generally the grey of morning, *sakaki* boughs are laid beside the shrine and provision of incense (*shinko*) is made; after which the officials of the Bureau of Rites and those of the Imperial household file in and seat themselves on either side of the hall. The doors of the shrine are then opened, and offerings of various kinds—vegetables, fish, cloth and so forth—are carried in and ranged before it, solemn music in Japanese style being performed the while. Thereafter the princes of the blood and all officials of the two highest ranks (*shinnin* and *chokunin*), as well as the peers of the “musk chamber” (*Jako-no-ma*) and the “golden-pheasant chamber” (*Kinkei-no-ma*) enter, and when they are seated the Emperor himself appears and, proceeding slowly to the shrine, bows his head, takes a branch of *sakaki*<sup>1</sup> with pendent *gohei*, and having

<sup>1</sup> The use of *sakaki* (*clayera Japonica*) is referred to the sylvan method of worship practised in the earliest times. A space surrounded by thick trees constituted the hall of rites. The trees were called a “sacred



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waved it in token of the purification of sins, ignites a stick of incense and places it upright in the censer, thereafter repeating a ritual (*notto*). So long as the Emperor is present in the hall all the officials remain standing. His Majesty then retires, and, on his departure, worship of the same kind but without any prayer is performed by a representative of the Prince Imperial, by the princes of the blood and by the various officials, each in due order of rank. Finally the offerings are removed and the shrine is closed to accompaniment of music, as before, and all retire. An interval of a few minutes succeeds, and then, once more, the officials of the household department resume their seats, preparatory to worship by the empress dowager and the empress. The routine and rites are exactly as before, but the official worshippers are different. They now include nobles of all orders, officials of the two inferior grades (*sonin* and *hannin*), *Shinto* and Buddhist superintendents and the chief priests of the fence" (*himorogi*), and it seems probable that strips of the cloth offered to the deities were hung from the branches. Thus, even after a shrine had been built to receive the divine insignia (the mirror, the sword and the jewel), a bough of *sakaki* with white pendants (*gohai*) continued to be included in the paraphernalia of the ceremony of worship.



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*Monto* sect. The ceremony, owing to the numbers that take part in it and the unvaried solemnity of their procedure, occupies a long time, but is of the simplest character.

It is significant that the chief representatives of Buddhism join in these acts of *Shinto* worship ; but since, as we have already seen, the apostles of Buddhism in Japan combined their creed with the indigenous faith by declaring, in the eighth century, that the Buddha of Light (*Dainichi Nyorai*, the Indian *Birushanabutsu*) had been incarnated as Amaterasu in Japan, as Sakya-muni in India and as Confucius in China, Buddhist hierarchs of modern times merely obey the tenets of their religion when they bow before the *Shinto* shrine in the Hall of Reverence. Christianity, however, has made no such adaptation, and it will be at once apparent that there is here a marked distinction between the attitudes of Christianity and Buddhism towards the State. It will also be apparent that to speak of a complete separation between the Church and the State is misleading. Were it the custom in England, for example, that all the officials of the



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central government and all the heads of religious sects throughout the realm should attend on fixed occasions in Westminster Abbey and assist at divine service according to prescribed rites, no one could think of questioning the fact that Church and State were very closely bound together. It is not to be understood that compulsion is exercised with regard to such matters in Japan. Among the body of officials who meet in the Hall of Reverence there must be many Christians. It would be possible for these men to absent themselves on the ground of sickness. In no country does the conventional element of an excuse receive more generous recognition than in Japan. The plea of "indisposition" is accepted without scrutiny and is understood to be serviceable as an explanation no less than as a reason. But if officials who profess Christianity and attend Christian places of worship made a habit of standing aloof, on whatever plea, from the services conducted by the Emperor in honour of the Sun Goddess and the spirits of the Imperial ancestors, can there be any doubt about the impression that such differentiation must ulti-



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mately produce upon the mind of the nation? In point of fact Christians do not stand aloof. They bow their heads and burn incense before the shrine in company with the disciples of Shaka and of *Shinto*. How much violence they do to their own religious convictions in thus acting, how much homage they pay to the god of expediency, it is not for us to inquire. "Men can be strangled with a strand of soft silk," says a Japanese proverb. The impalpable essence of Japanese patriotism takes the place of the soft strand in this instance. The divine origin of the Emperor, the unbroken line of his descent from the immortals, the guardianship that his deified ancestors extend to the realm and its people—these are essential bases of Japanese patriotism. It is a passionate patriotism, a fierce patriotism, overlaid from time to time in the past by ashes of disloyal ambition or domestic dissension, but now fanned into strong flame by the wind of Western masterfulness and intolerance.

Whether any Japanese subject could openly dissociate himself from the tenets of this national cult—for patriotism in modern Japan is nothing



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less than a national cult — and could yet lead a pleasant, peaceful existence, is at least problematical. At any rate, there has been no evident tendency towards dissociation. Some compromise seems to have been effected between conscience and convention. It must be added, also, that worship as a unit of a large company on the State occasions alluded to above is not the only ordeal prescribed by custom. Any official, humble or exalted, who is ordered to proceed abroad on public business, must, before leaving Japan, proceed to the Hall of Reverence and perform an act of homage or worship, whichever definition he pleases to adopt. That is a duty: there is no option. Possibly it is regarded in the light merely of a farewell declaration of allegiance. Possibly, also, the main body of the Christians in Japan accept the subtle distinction privately drawn by some of their fellow-believers, that so long as there is no worship in spirit, genuflections performed by the body have no connection with religion. But it is singular that this question has always been excluded from the sphere of public discussion,



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and singular also that Christians do not apparently recognise how plainly they are differentiated from the rest of the nation by the absence of any representative on ceremonial occasions in the Hall of Reverence. There is no native Christian prelate in Japan. There are Roman Catholic and Protestant hierarchs of European and American origin,—an archbishop and several bishops and archdeacons,—but as yet no Japanese subject has attained to such dignity. Each sect, however, has its senior pastor or father, of Japanese nationality, and unless these attend the ceremonials in the Hall of Reverence as do the chief representatives of Buddhism, the Christian element of the population continues to be marked as standing aloof from rites which, in the eyes of patriotic Japanese, are connected with the very basis of nationalism. We merely state the problem. It cannot be omitted from any record of the conditions existing in modern Japan.

The days set apart for these ceremonials within the palace are not marked by any act



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of general devotion without, since the Emperor worships in lieu of his people. They are merely observed as national holidays. Every householder hangs the national flag before his gate, but visits are not paid to temples or shrines, nor is there any other evidence of a special occasion. It should be noted, too, that the description given here applies only to the ceremonial system organised subsequently to the Restoration in 1867. Prior to that time, the deities supposed to preside over worldly affairs were worshipped at fifteen set seasons annually. But the rites have been reduced and simplified. Formerly, the deities that gave abundant crops; the deities that warded off plague and pestilence; the deities that breathed the spirit of vigour into things animate and inanimate; the deities that guarded against conflagrations; the deities that quelled evil demons; the deities that laid to rest wandering souls of the dead; the deities that made rain fall in time of drought — all these were severally and collectively placated. But now the *Shinto* of the State has made a large step toward monotheism. Amaterasu is



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worshipped as the supreme being; her descendants, the ancestors of the Emperor, receive homage as associated deities performing a special tutelary rôle; the other members of the pantheon are virtually neglected.

This part of our subject would not be complete without a word about the *Shinto* shrines and Buddhist temples as they exist to-day.

Shrines are divided into four official grades—state, provincial, prefectural, and divisional or district. There are subdivisions to which we need not refer. State shrines are dedicated, for the most part, to the divine ancestors, but at a few the objects of worship are sovereigns or subjects that attained special distinction.<sup>1</sup> Between a state shrine of the first grade and a district shrine of the last, there is, of course, a great difference in standing, but there need not be any corresponding difference in the relative importance of the deities worshipped there.

<sup>1</sup> It might be supposed that many Emperors would have received this distinction. But among the hundred and twenty-eight sovereigns who have sat on the throne of Japan, two only—Ojin and Kwammu—are thus honoured. On the other hand, great subjects have been deified much more frequently: for example, Sugawara-no-Michizane (Temman), Kusunoki Masashige (Minatogawa), Tokugawa Ieyasu (Tosho), Hideyoshi the *Taiko* (Toyokuni), etc.







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Strange that the common belief that heretics have despised the ancestors of the Emperor is not being associated with performing a special duty for the other members of the nation are virtually neglected.

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Among the best preserved temples of Japan we would have none of the famous ones, the head of one twenty-five sovereigns and the head of one hundred and twenty-five. One such is the temple of the Emperor's Father, two others of the Emperor's Mother. On the other hand, great shrines have been built to the gods of the sea, for example, Suwayama, Aikazaki, and others. There are also shrines to the gods of the sun, moon, and stars, for example, Yatai, and others.

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BRONZE GATE AND TOMB, SHIBA PARK, TOKYO.







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Sometimes the object of worship at a state shrine of most imposing character is venerated elsewhere under circumstances that suggest an altogether inferior being. It is simply a question of local repute, financial capabilities or other independent causes, just as in the Occident the same God is prayed to in city cathedrals and village churches. The shrine of the Sun Goddess, the *Daijīn-gu* of Ise, stands at the head of all, but scarcely a hamlet in the realm is without a *Daijīn-gu* of its own under the alias of *Myō-jin*. As for the number of the deities, it has never been counted by official statisticians. But the shrines that enjoy any considerable popularity are comparatively few, not more than ten in all. The incomes enjoyed by these shrines are not formidable. Some can boast of forty thousand *yen* annually; some of only a few hundred. Small grants from the State, supplemented by the offerings of the pious and the sale of amulets, are the sources of revenue. The special functions assigned by the people to the deities worshipped at these shrines are various. No one knows what spirit



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of heaven or earth is venerated at the *Suiten-gu* in Tokyo, and the shrine enjoys the peculiar distinction of being the private property of a nobleman. It stands within the precincts of his residence and contributes a handsome sum to his yearly maintenance. But despite the anonymity of the god, people credit him with power to protect against all perils of sea and flood, against burglary and, by a strange juxtaposition of "spheres of influence," against the pains of parturition. The deity of *Inari* secures efficacy for prayer and abundance of crops; the *Taisha* presides over wedlock; the *Kompira* shares with the *Suiten-gu* the privilege of guarding those that "go down to the deep." The rest confer prosperity, avert sickness, cure sterility, bestow literary talent, endow with warlike prowess, and so on. There are no less than 193,476 *Shinto* shrines in Japan, but 14,766 priests suffice to perform the rites of the creed. It will be asked how one priest manages to officiate at thirteen shrines—which is the average. The answer is that he does not officiate, as folks in the West understand the term. It may be said generally



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of *Shinto* shrines that not more than one service is performed there annually. The building stands frequently uninhabited, apparently untended. Now and then a worshipper comes, grasps the thick hempen rope that hangs in front, sways it against the gong across which it is suspended, and having thus summoned the presiding spirit, mutters a brief prayer, deposits two or three *cash* in the alms chest and goes his way. The Buddhists have 108,000 temples and 55,000 priests. It will be seen that many of these temples cannot fare better in the matter of ministrations than do the *Shinto* shrines.

As *Shinto* shrines are officially graded, so are the priests<sup>1</sup> connected with them. But the rank held by the greatest of the latter corresponds only with that of a local governor or a Vice-Minister of State. The hierarchy does not climb to a lofty elevation; there is no Archbishop of Canterbury, no Pope of Rome. Nor would the emoluments of office excite the envy of an English rector. The official allowance, when there

<sup>1</sup> It is not absolutely correct to speak of a *Shinto* minister as a "priest." He is called *Shinkwan*, which signifies rather a "*Shinto* official."



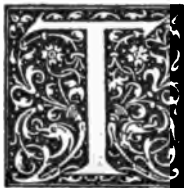
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is one, varies from one hundred *yen* to thirty-three *yen* monthly. Supplemented by a portion of the income accruing to the shrine, the portliest stipend of a *Shinto* priest probably amounts to twenty pounds sterling per month. In order to qualify for the magnificent chance of such opulence, he has to pass an examination, unless, indeed—and the contingency is not rare—his father and forefathers have been priests for ten generations. Buddhist priests have no official rank, nor are their temples graded. They live on the contributions of their parishioners and on the income derived from lands that were of great extent and large wealth-yielding capacity until the government of the Restoration reduced their area to a mere fraction of its original dimensions.



## XII

### SUPERSTITIONS AND DIVINATION

HE MIDDLE AND LOWER orders in Japan and women of all classes are undoubtedly superstitious. They believe in ghosts, in demons, in the possession of supernatural power by animals, in the efficacy of divination and in the potency of spells and amulets.

It seems curious at first sight that a people whose treatment of animals is markedly kind should regard the deity of the animal world as an inhuman monster, and should attribute one of the most terrible phenomena of nature as well as many of the accidents of daily life to the malevolent interference of fabulous creatures. It is popularly believed that a giant catfish (*namazu*) lies under Japan. Over its head is built the shrine of Daimyo-jin at Kashima in the province of Hitachi, and the deity is supposed to have his



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feet planted on the monster's snout. Whenever the god reduces the pressure or alters the position of his feet the catfish writhes and the earth quakes. Beside the shrine stands a stone called "the pivot rock" (*kaname-ishi*). It is in the form of a rude pillar, and the people believe that it penetrates to an enormous depth and reaches to the head of the catfish. But these theories are in some degree the outcome of a time when animals were actually a source of terror. Japan was never troubled, it is true, by the fiercer beasts of prey, lions and tigers, nor yet by venomous reptiles. If her island chain once formed a part of the Korean peninsula, as is generally believed, it would seem inevitable that the tiger should have made his home in Japanese forests no less than in Korean. But there is no evidence that either tiger or lion ever roamed the wilds of Japan. Snakes abound, but with one solitary exception — the *mamushi* — they are absolutely harmless. Wolves, however, were certainly numerous and destructive in ancient times, though they may now be said to survive in the realm of tradition only, and bears occasion-



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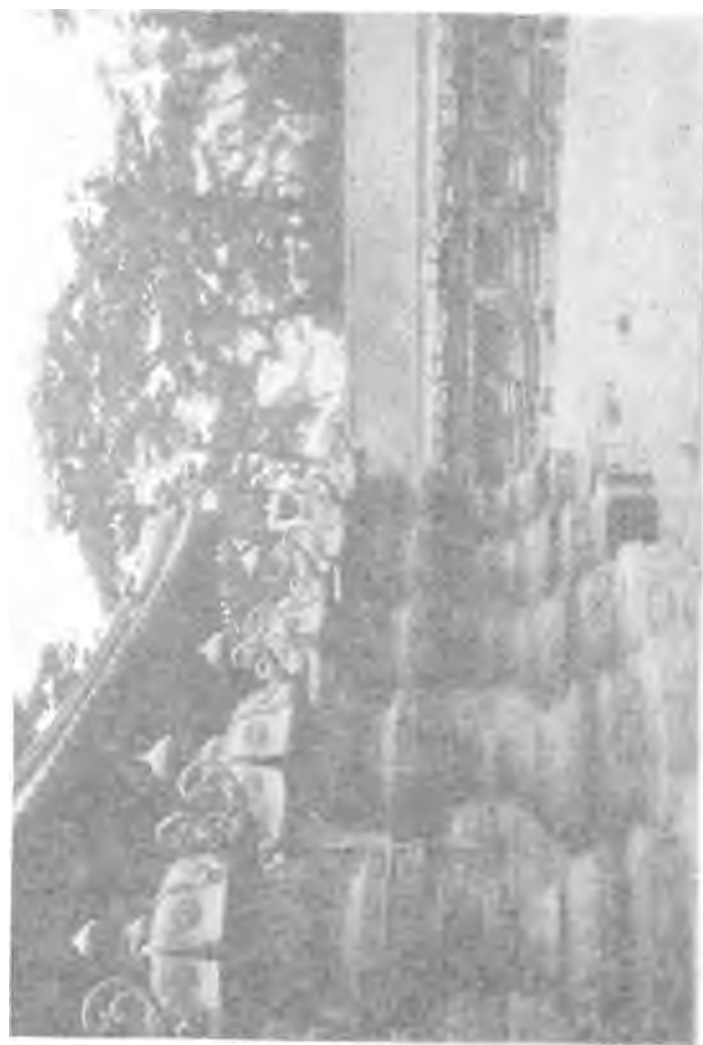
ally showed formidable propensities, though they, too, are to-day regarded merely as the hunter's quarry. At present the wild dog—the "mountain dog" (*yama-inu*)—is the only beast that inspires terror. He is not a wolf, but merely a dog that has never been domesticated. The Japanese dog is a miserable brute. In the stage of puppyhood he presents some attractive features of fluffiness and rotundity, and artists have often recognised his picturesque qualities. But a few months of life suffice to convert him into an ill-shapen, unsightly and useless cur. Except with children, therefore, he is never a pet, and he requites their kindness by eating them. Even within the precincts of the capital, during recent years, packs of dogs, starving outcasts, have been known to pull down a child in one of the waste spaces that mark the sites of former feudal mansions. Little children, however, are now the only victims of such shocking accidents; whereas beasts of prey were formerly terrible to adults also, as may be inferred from a cruel custom, long abandoned indeed but certainly practised in remote eras, the custom of offering human sacri-



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fices to the deity of animals. Tradition has become much confused about this custom. Many Japanese believe that human beings were among the offerings originally made to the tutelary deities in conjunction with fish, vegetables and products of industry. But the best authorities agree that such sacrifices were made to the god of wild beasts only. The victim was always a girl, and the manner of selecting her was singular. From the earliest ages the archer's weapons have been regarded with the utmost reverence in Japan. Having been originally instrumental in bringing the barbarous autochthons under the celestial invaders' sway, the bow and the arrow subsequently became symbols of security against all perils, and in that sense were fixed upon the ridge-pole of a newly erected roof. The habit survives still. Not in remote country districts only, but even in the great cities, houses may to-day be seen with a bent bow and an adjusted arrow standing where a chimney would protrude its head from a Western roof. It is said that, in prehistoric times, the bow and arrow assumed that position by an exercise of super-





THE HOTEL AT SINGAPORE



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MORTUARY BRONZE LANTERNS IN THE TEMPLE ENCLOSURE AT SHIBA PARK, TOKYO.







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natural power. A householder, rising in the morning, would find that his roof had been thus distinguished during the night, and the event was accepted as a divine intimation that the eldest unmarried daughter of the family must be sacrificed. She was buried alive, the supposition being that her flesh served as a repast for the deity. But the priests by and by found a more profitable manner of disposing of these unfortunate girls: they were sold as slaves. The tradition is a mixed record of practical knavery and gross superstition. The bow-and-arrow sign plainly indicates that rustic ignorance was exploited by dishonest priests. On the other hand, the superstitious fancy must have existed or it could not have been played upon. There is little hope, apparently, of ascertaining the details of a custom which probably ceased to be practical before the first records of popular life were compiled.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The monster at whose shrine these sacrifices (*htomigoku*, literally, offerings of a human body) are said to have been made, is spoken of by some writers as an animal in the service of Sakyamuni. The responsibility of the barbarous rite would therefore rest with Buddhism. But the sanctity of life has always been a fundamental tenet of the Buddhist religion. Thus the tradition becomes altogether vague and untrust-



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Another form of human sacrifice believed to have been common in early ages and said to have been witnessed by men of the present generation was called *ikiuzume*, or burying alive. The prevalent idea about this custom is that, at the inception of some great work, such as the building of a bridge or the erection of a castle, a human being was buried alive near the foundations to secure stability. But facts and fancies are here commingled. What really happened was this: In the era of forced labour, when every adult rustic had to contribute a certain number of days' work annually to the service of the State or of his liege lord, it was usual for the official superintendent of these unwilling toilers to stand over them with a bare-bladed spear in hand. Any display of laziness justified fatal recourse to the spear, and the corpse of a man thus done to death was treated as so much inanimate material—thrown between the piles of an embankment or tossed into the foundations

worthy as to its details. Nothing can be accepted as certain except the fact that human sacrifices were made to propitiate the deity of wild beasts, and that human beings subsequently turned the superstition to their own villanous uses.



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of a building. That species of fierce incitement was generally resorted to when extraordinary expedition had to be attained: when an inundation had to be averted, a river dammed before the flowing of the tide, a fortification constructed on the eve of attack, or a work concluded in anticipation of the advent of some great man. It proved, of course, immensely efficacious, and may serve in some degree to explain the really wonderful achievements that stand to the credit of human effort in mediæval and even in modern Japan. Two corpses are said to be mouldering under the scarps of the futile forts hurriedly erected for the defence of Edo (Tokyo) in the interval between Commodore Perry's first and second comings; and looking down from Noge Hill in the suburbs of Yokohama one may see the shrine of a servant girl who sacrificed herself to expedite the reclamation of a swamp behind the foreign settlement. Such incidents, however, had not in their origin any legitimate connection with superstition.

Since the English word "nightmare" indicates that the subjective character of that natural dis-



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turbance was not recognised when the Anglo-Saxon language came into existence, we are prepared to find a corresponding superstition among the Japanese. They used to believe, and the lower orders do still believe, that a rat possesses some demoniacal power which it exercises maliciously during the night. But nobody concerns himself much about the question. Half a page of history, however, is devoted to the account of an Imperial nightmare, the work of a very strange monster. The Emperor Shirakawa the second (1158 A. D.) was the victim of the visitation. Every night he fell into convulsions, and neither medicine nor prayer gave him relief. It was observed that, at the moment of his seizure, a dark cloud emerged from a forest eastward of the palace and settled over the roof of His Majesty's chamber. The Court, in conclave, decided that a warrior's weapon was needed, and invited the renowned Yorimasa to undertake the task. That night, as the cloud floated to its place and the Emperor's paroxysm overtook him, Yorimasa, with a prayer to *Hachiman* (the God of War) on his lips, shot an arrow into the heart



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of the cloud. There fell to the ground a monster with the head of an ape, the body of a serpent, the legs of a tiger and the strident cry of the fabulous bird *nue*. Yorimasa received as reward an Imperial sword and a palace maiden, and the Emperor's nightmares ceased. There could be no doubt in the minds of later generations about the accuracy of these facts, for even the name of the beautiful girl bestowed on Yorimasa was known: it was "Sweet-flag" (*Ayame*). Such a detail raised the record to the rank of authentic history in the eyes of people who believed the wind to be the breath of a mighty spirit and the stars to be the sources of rain-drops.

Among all superstitions connected with animals in Japan, faith in the supernatural attributes of the fox is most widely entertained. This notion was originally imported from China. The fox, according to popular tradition, can assume human form, and is also capable of entering into a man or woman. Roaming over a grassy plain, the animal picks up a skull, puts it on his head, and facing towards the north star, worships. At first



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he performs his religious genuflections and obeisances slowly and circumspectly, but by and by, however high he jumps towards the star, his skull-crown remains immovable. After a hundred acts of worship, he becomes capable of transforming himself into a human being; but if he desires to be able to assume the shape of a beautiful maiden, he must live in the vicinity of a graveyard. As a girl he is the central figure in numerous legends. His very name — *ki-tsu-ne* "come and sleep" — is derived from such a legend, a white-haired legend of the year 545 A. D. Ono, an inhabitant of Mino, spent the seasons longing for his ideal of female beauty. He met her one evening on a vast moor and married her. Simultaneously with the birth of their son, Ono's dog was delivered of a pup, which, as it grew up, became more and more hostile to the lady of the moors. She begged her husband to kill it, but he refused. At last, one day, the dog attacked her so fiercely that she lost heart, resumed her proper shape, leaped over the fence and fled. "You may be a fox," Ono called after her, "but you are the mother of my son and I love you.



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Come back when you please; you will always be welcome." So every evening she stole back and slept in his arms. The illiterate Japanese, even of the present day, though he may not entertain any very positive faith in such occurrences, preserves toward them a demeanour of respectful uncertainty. There are scores of such stories, and hundreds of folks who listen to them gravely. There are also weak-minded persons to whose imagination these legends appeal so vividly that they become subjective victims of fox-possession. They bark like a fox, exhibit the utmost aversion to dogs and otherwise lose their human identity. In many cases these imaginary seizures are cured by the aid of a priest. The patient is informed that means of enticing the fox to return to the hills have been provided, and that, at a certain hour and in obedience to a religious incantation, the animal will take its departure. Such remedies, attended, as they generally are, by success, have the effect of confirming the superstition; and in rural districts few Japanese are entirely without belief in the phenomenon of fox-possession (*kitsune-tsuki*). History



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is not without records attesting the supernatural powers of the fox. On the Nasu moor (*Nasu-no hara*) in the province of Shimo-tsuke there used to stand a large rock known as *sessho-seki*, or the stone of death. It had been bewitched by a fox, and any living thing that touched it, man, bird or animal, perished. In the year 1248 the Emperor Fukakusa II commissioned a priest of renowned piety, Genno Osho, to exorcise the evil spirit. Genno repaired to the moor, invoked the aid of Buddha and struck the rock with his staff, whereupon the big stone split into fragments, and a beautiful girl stepping out, thanked the priest with tears and vanished.

The badger (*tanuki*) is credited with somewhat similar powers, but is regarded rather as a mischievous practical joker than as a malicious demon. One of his most celebrated exploits as a supernatural trickster was in connection with a tea-urn which fell into the uncanny habit of developing the tail, snout and claws of a badger at most inopportune moments of a social reunion. On moonlight nights the badger raises himself on his hind legs and goes roistering about the



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country, beating upon his paunch as though it were a drum, knocking at the doors of timid folks, leading belated travellers into wrong roads and terrifying children and old women in sundry ways. The house of a farmer in the province of Awa recently became the beast's playground. A kitchen knife moved automatically from peg to block, and the fish-kettle was found to contain only boiling water when meal time arrived. One day a rustic presented himself as the servant of a man to whom the farmer owed money and demanded payment in his master's name. The farmer handed over three pieces of silver. After a time the creditor himself came and asked for his money. Then, of course, the farmer knew that he had been tricked by a badger. Presently the tail of the farm horse was shorn off by invisible agency, and the horse itself, escaping from the stable, took refuge in a neighbouring village. The farmer led it back, locked it in and locked the badger out, but again the horse absconded, and on searching its stall the farmer found the three pieces of silver that had been carried off by the pseudo servant. In such *rôles* the badger



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thrusts himself upon the stage of human existence. His sphere of influence is occasionally invaded by the sickle-bearing demon, *kama-itachi*, a nondescript demon which sometimes cuts tresses from women's hair as they walk in unfrequented places, and often inflicts bleeding wounds on people's legs and arms without any visible exercise of effort. The *kama-itachi's* performances are vaguely connected with a sudden solution of atmospheric continuity, a whirlwind or other aerial disturbance; and if a country bumpkin finds that he has unconsciously received a hurt, he has no hesitation in attributing it to the demoniacal sickle-carrier. The *kappa* (river-urchin) is another fabulous monster, malevolent like the sickle-bearer, but more deadly in its doings. It dwells in rivers and lakes, and its favourite haunts are catalogued with solemn accuracy. No one has attempted to describe the *kama-itachi*, but the *kappa's* appearance is minutely depicted. It has the body of a ten-year-old child, is hairy like a monkey, possesses eyes of piercing brilliancy, has in its skull a cup-like cavity, speaks the language of human beings,



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lives in the water, but emerges at nightfall and steals melons and egg-fruit, its favourite food. Wrestling is the pastime affected by it. It invites men to try a bout, and despite its puny proportions, comes off violently victorious, unless, indeed, the water contained in its skull-cap be spilled, when its strength vanishes. To defeat it, however, is as bad as to be defeated, for the result is loss of reason and gradual wasting away. This river-urchin, in common with the snapping-turtle, is credited with vampire propensities; it attacks people in the water and sucks their blood.<sup>1</sup> Even the dog has a place in Japanese demonology. How the faithful animal originally fell under suspicion of supernatural wickedness it is difficult to ascertain, but tradition represents him not as naturally malevolent, but merely as the agent of human passion. An old woman consumed with hatred of a powerful enemy whom her vengeance could not reach, buried her favourite dog in the ground so that its head alone

<sup>1</sup> In the Uma district of Iyo province there is a lake where country folk often bathe in the dog days. There the river-urchin or the snapping-turtle is said to claim two victims yearly. They lose their colour after emerging from the lake, and gradually pine away with symptoms that do not bear description.



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protruded, and then, having fondled the head for a time, cut it off with a bamboo saw, saying: "If you have a soul, kill my enemy, and I will worship you as a deity." Her wish was gratified, but the spirit of the dog became thenceforth an inmate of her house and made her suffer for her cruelty.<sup>1</sup> The superstition outlined by this legend generally takes the form of a belief that the blood of the dog-demon (*inu-gami*) flows in the veins of certain families. In the "island of the four provinces" (*Shikoku*) and in the eight provinces forming the "mountain-shadow district" (*San-in-do*), the dog-demon is supposed to have tainted many households, and ignorant folks, before contracting a marriage, are careful to employ an expert who examines the genealogical tables of the bride and bridegroom in order to ascertain whether they contain any trace of the evil influence. Bakin, Japan's greatest writer of fiction, based his celebrated romance, the "eight-

<sup>1</sup> The example set by this vengeful old woman is said to have been followed by others in a more logical fashion. Their idea being to convert the spirit of longing into a physical agency, they buried a dog, leaving only its head exposed, and surrounding it with tempting viands, suffered it to starve to death. Having thus received a vivid object lesson in the pain of unsatisfied desire, the dog's spirit was supplicated to save its former master or mistress from similar suffering.



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dog tale" (*Hakken-den*), upon the Buddhist doctrine that animals have souls. Frequently characteristic of fox-possessed men is an outrageous insistence on being served with the best of everything at the shortest notice, but when any one lineally related to the dog-demon covets the possessions of a neighbour, the influence of the *inu-gami* overtakes the latter and quickly reduces him to a state of dementia.

It will readily be conceived that if the dog finds a place in demonology, the cat is not exempted. The latter, indeed, figures prominently in some most aristocratic legends, and is made responsible for crimes which, under less romantic circumstances, would be ascribed to very vulgar passions. Old age develops the cat's evil propensities. When time has rendered it gaunt and grisly it becomes a *neko-mata*, or cat-imp. Its agency is detected in weird lights that dance above the floor, darting out of reach when pursued, in the spinning of untouched wheels, in the turning of beds during their inmates' sleep. Then, perhaps, the old cat is detected sitting on its hind legs with its head



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wrapped in the towel of the person it intends to bewitch, and if it is killed opportunely, it is found to have two tails and a body five feet long.

Among people so profoundly convinced of the truth of animistic philosophy and, at the same time, so keenly appreciative of the beauties of nature, it was inevitable that the most graceful or brilliant objects in the world of foliage and flowers should be invested with spirit attributes. Many pretty legends grew out of that conviction. The cherry bloom, type of glowing loveliness, and the willow, image of everything that is refined and gentle, often took the shape of winsome maidens and bestowed themselves upon some great warrior or noble exile. So, too, when Suguwara-no-Michizane, the most worthy and the most unfortunate of Japanese statesmen, became the victim of a rival's slanders and was banished to Dazaifu in Chikuzen, the rosy-petalled plum tree on whose boughs he had hung verselets every spring from the days of his boyhood, flew through the clouds from Kyoto and planted itself by his side in the place of his



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solitude. The Japanese love this legend of the flying plum (*tobi-ume*), and love also to tell of the peonies of Ono-no-komachi, the celebrated poetess, whose life included the most luxurious and the most illustrious as well as the most miserable and the most abject experiences that ever fell to the lot of an Oriental lady. In the village where she was born a shrine stands dedicated to her memory, and near it grow ninety-nine peony trees, planted by her own hand just a thousand years ago, and now tended by her spirit. From time to time some of the little trees were transplanted, for the sake of their magnificent blossoms, to city gardens, but invariably they pined away and would have perished had they not been carried back to their old place beside the shrine.

Buddhism, with its worlds of hungry devils and of infernal beings and its realistic pictures of the torments suffered by the souls of men in Yemma's (the god of Hades) kingdom, is responsible for the Japanese people's conception of an anthropomorphic demon (*oni*). They represent him with horns, a vast, heavy-fanged mouth,



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glaring eyes, a flat nose, broadly expanding nostrils, three-fingered hands and three-toed feet, long silvery talons, and wearing nothing but a girdle of tiger skin. He has all the ferocity and all the malignity proper to his kind. He takes his pastime when on earth in the depths of forests and the caverns of remote mountains, lives there on human flesh and carries off beautiful women to share his orgies. In the ninth century he began to be a prominent figure in Japanese imagination, and his doings since that era are recorded in a library of startling records too voluminous to be opened here. There is, however, another genus of demon that deserves notice as being essentially an outcome of Japanese fancy. It is the *tengu*,<sup>1</sup> a monster

<sup>1</sup> The *tengu* is one of the most mysterious of Japanese monsters. The ideographs with which the name is written signify "heavenly dog." One tradition says that, in the year 638 A. D., the Emperor Jomyo gave the name *tengu* to a meteor which flashed from east to west with a loud detonation. Another and more venerable account alleges that the *tengu* were emanations from the excessive ardour of the "Impetuous Male Deity" (Susa-no-o); that they were female demons, with human bodies, beasts' heads, vast ears, noses so long that they could hang men on them and fly a thousand miles without feeling the burden, teeth that bit through swords and spears, and the faculty of becoming pregnant by inhaling miasma. They defy the control of the celestial deities and are altogether an unruly, tameless band. The description of the *tengu* given in the text is, however, the popularly received idea.







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A BUDDHIST FUNERAL.







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of huge stature and enormous strength, with the body of a man and the face and wings of a bird. The demon proper (*oni*) has its permanent abode in other worlds, but the *tengu* is still supposed to frequent the recesses of high mountains. He is not a particularly malevolent being. Sometimes he spirits men away and restores them to their homes in a semi-demented condition; sometimes he enters into frail girls and endows them with martial prowess of a miraculous quality; sometimes he gives fencing lessons to future heroes.<sup>1</sup> But he has faded, for the most part, out of the vista of adult observation, and now figures chiefly in children's tales and old women's fables.

Believing that the spirits of the dead watch over and protect their living kindred, the Japanese believe also that the ghosts of the departed sometimes vex and torture those who used them ill on this side of the grave. Deeds of blood and cruelty have brought upon their perpetrators apparitions and mental torments ending in mad-

<sup>1</sup> Yoshitsune, the hero of the *Gen-pei* wars in the thirteenth century, is supposed to have received fencing lessons from a *tengu* in the woods near the monastery where his boyhood was passed.



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ness, ruined fortunes and suicide. The lower orders found comfort in thinking that the miseries they had sometimes to suffer unresistingly at the hands of the great, might be thus requited after the death of the sufferer, but, on the whole, the restless ghost with a mission of revenge never seriously disturbed the public mind. Haunted houses, however, are so common that in every city two or three may be seen standing untenanted. Educated men might have no hesitation in renting or purchasing such places, but they would certainly find difficulty in getting servants to live there, from which it may be inferred that the reality of ghostly appearances is not questioned by the masses. When a girl warns her faithless lover that her spirit will haunt him (*tottsuku*), she does not doubt her ability to make the threat good, and when folks allege that they have seen the soul of the newly dead float away over eaves and roof, a transparent globe<sup>1</sup> of impalpable essence, their faith in the accuracy of their eyesight is honest. Death is

<sup>1</sup> This phenomenon, spoken of as *hito-dama*, commands wide credence.



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not an essential preliminary to the exercise of spirit power. The passion of hatred or revenge may become so intense as to liberate the soul from its bodily tenement, and despatch it upon a mission of hostility. All these beliefs have left their mark upon the literature of the nation and upon the canvas of the artist. In a deeper stratum of superstition may be found still stranger fossils of tradition — the wild man, the wild<sup>1</sup> woman, the female ogre (*kijo*) and the mountain genius (*sen-nin*). The wild man and the wild woman are harmless curiosities. There is a story of a wild woman caught in a spring trap in Hiuga province. Her body differed from that of an ordinary female only in being covered with white hair. The wild man is said to abound among the mountains of Kyūshū, where the people call him *yama-warō*. He is described as a large, black-haired monkey, possessing enormous muscular strength. He steals food from the villages, but is always ready to help woodcutters to transport timber in return for

<sup>1</sup> Literally the "mountain man" (*yama-otoko*) and the "mountain woman" (*yama-onna*).



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a ball of rice. Any attempt to capture or kill him brings dire calamity, insanity, plague or sudden death upon his assailants. The female ogre (*kijo*) figures frequently in the pages of romance. She is a cannibal, capable of flitting about like a moth and traversing pathless mountains. Once in every cycle of sixty years, when the "senior fire element" is linked with the zodiacal horse, a female man-eater is born, but it does not follow that the intervening years are never disgraced by the appearance of such monsters, which, for the rest, belong rather to the fantasies of the nursery than to the superstitions of grown-up folks. A more widely disseminated belief, which has also left indelible traces in the realm of fine art and sculpture, is based upon the theory that, by mortification of the flesh and complete annihilation of all carnal desires, the divine attributes of the soul may be actively developed though it still retains its earthly tenement. This superstition came to Japan from China. It had its origin in the hermits or ascetics who hid themselves in mountain caves beyond the sounds of the world's passion and confusion, and thus,



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fading imperceptibly out of human knowledge, were supposed to have attained immortality. These *sen-nin*, or genii of the mountains, found imitators in Japan, as did everything Chinese.<sup>1</sup> Even now there are recluses living in hollow trees or rocky caverns among the forests and mountains of Ehime prefecture and of northern *To-san-do*. They subsist on herbs and fruits, and hunters sometimes carry to country hamlets tales of strange beings appearing and disappearing so suddenly as to suggest supernatural powers. Out of such materials the myths of the *sen-nin*, and probably of the *ten-gu* also, were constructed. The Japanese view the *sen-nin* (or *rishi*) with

<sup>1</sup> The first Japanese *sen-nin* was a native of Noto, by name Yōshō. He was born in 870 A. D., and his supernatural character was presaged by his mother's dream that she had swallowed the sun. Exceptional ability and profound charity marked his early life, which was devoted chiefly to the study of the "Lotus of the Law." Abstaining from rice and barley, he lived on fruit only, and at length he succeeded in reducing his diet to a grain of millet daily. Thus, having attained supernatural power, he departed from the earth in the year 901. His mantle was found hanging from the branch of a tree, with a scroll:—"I bequeath my mantle to Emmei of *Dōgen-ji*" (the name of a temple). Emmei, seeking his master year after year among forests and mountains, became himself a *sen-nin*. After Yōshō's disappearance, his father fell sick, and prayed fervently that he might once more see his favourite son. By and by the voice of Yōshō was heard overhead, reciting the "Lotus of the Law," and promising that if flowers were offered and incense burned on the 18th of every month, his spirit would come, drawn by the perfume and the flame, to requite his father's love.



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playful gravity. In the innumerable representations of these strange beings that are to be found among the works of celebrated painters or carvers in wood and ivory, a ray of laughter always lightens the general austerity of the conception. Sobu, watching his sacred geese, looks as though he were himself on the verge of cackling; Chokaro, liberating his magic horse from a monster gourd, seems astounded at his own achievement; Gama, with his toad warlock, is sufficiently dirty, distraught and unkempt to suit such companionship; Tekkai, as he blows his soul into space, presents an inane aspect quite in character with the myth that he forgot to provide for the safety of his body during the wanderings of his spirit, and thus had to be ultimately content with the unburied corpse of a beggar; Roko balances himself on his flying tortoise with the air of a decrepit acrobat; and *Kumé*, who fell from his cloud-chariot because his carnal desires were revived by the sight of a beautiful girl's image mirrored in a stream, has a wavering mien suggestive of some such catastrophe. The mountain genii of Japan never meddled with



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earthly affairs, nor placed their supernatural powers at the disposal of human beings.

People to whose imagination the unknown fate of a hermit or the fanaticism of an ascetic presented such a mine of vivid myths did not fail to find weird explanations of the *ignis fatuus*. It was a ghost-fire (*in-kwa*), a demon-light (*oni-bi*), a fox-flame (*kitsune-bi*), a flash-pillar (*hiba-shira*), a badger-blaze (*tanuki-bi*), a dragon-torch (*riu-to*), a lamp of Buddha (*Butsu-to*), and so forth. Here are two of the legends that have grown out of these wild-fires:

In the Nikaido district of Settsu province, from the middle of March to the end of June every year, there may be seen, resting sometimes on a roof, sometimes on the top of a tree, a globe of fire about a foot in diameter, which, when examined intently, is found to have a human face peering from its lurid surface. It is a harmless phenomenon. The people regard it with pity, recalling its origin. For, in remote ages, there lived in this district one Nikōbō, a beadsman (*yamabushi*), celebrated for his skill in exorcism. His services having been solicited on



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behalf of the sick wife of the local governor, he passed many days by the side of the lady's couch, practising his pious art. She recovered, but her husband in an excess of jealousy caused Nikōbō to be put to death, charging him with a foul crime. His benevolent work thus requited with inhuman wrong, the soul of the beadsman flamed with resentment, and, taking the form of a miraculous fire, hovered over the roof of the murderer's house and kindled a fever in his blood that finally consumed him. Since that time Nikōbō's ghost-flame pays a yearly visit to the scene of its suffering and its revenge.



















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